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A

REVIEW

OF THE

MISSIONARY LIFE AND LABOURS

OF

RICHARD WRIGHT.

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Not I, but the grace of God which was with me.—PAUL.

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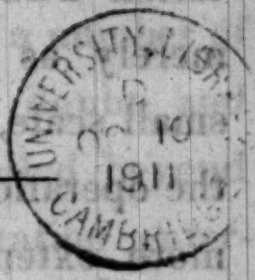
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TO THE

FRIENDS AND SUPPORTERS

OF THE

Unitarian Fund.



CHRISTIAN BRETHREN,

The following work is most respectfully dedicated to you; because many of the labors of which it contains an account could not have been undertaken without your support; and because they were performed under your auspices, and have received your approbation. As friends and supporters

of the Institution by which I have had the honor of being employed as a missionary, you are entitled to all the information I can give respecting my missionary exertions and their effects. It is hoped, that, while the successes stated show the importance of the Unitarian Fund, they will be regarded merely as a sample and earnest, on a small scale, of what will be effected by the operations of that Institution, much more extensively, at no very distant time; that what has been done will be considered only as the beginning of a work, which has for its object the universal diffusion of the pure doctrine and benignant spirit of the gospel, the general revival of primitive christianity both in faith and practice. To an object so highly important and godlike, every heart and hand, whatsoever indi-

vidnals have it in their power to contribute in any way, should be devoted. The zeal already manifested is a pledge of your future exertions, an earnest that you will continue to support plans, which if regarded at first as experiments, can no longef be viewed in that light, the practicability and usefulness of which the experience of a number of years has put beyond all doubt, and which have already succeeded beyond the most sanguine expectation entertained in the outset. Nor need it be doubted, that whatever further plans experience, the circumstances of the times, and the state of the Unitarian cause, may suggest, as really necessary, they will receive your countenance and support.

Gratefully acknowledging my sense of the obligations I am under, for the

countenance, support and encouragement I received from the commencement of my connection with the Unitarian Fund, and hoping that the following account of my labors as a missionary will receive your approbation,

I am,

CHRISTIAN BRETHREN,

With the utmost Respect,

Your devoted Servant,

In the Gospel of God,

R. WRIGHT.

Trowbridge,

June 26th, 1824.

PREFACE.

HAVING had the honor, and a high honor I esteem it, of being the first person whom it pleased God, in the course of his providence to employ as an Unitarian Missionary in this Kingdom, and of being engaged in the service of the Unitarian Fund from its commencement, a sketch of my Missionary labors, and their success, may not be thought altogether uninteresting. I am encouraged to form this opinion, by the sanction and approbation which they have received from a great many well informed and respectable persons.

It cannot be denied that the subject is somewhat novel. Such was the state of the Unitarian cause during the last century, even in the latter

part of it, that, by many people, few things would have been thought less probable than a successful Unitarian Mission. He who should have talked of doing what has since been done, it is likely, would have been thought an enthusiastic visionary. Thank God, Unitarian Missionary plans can no longer be spoken of as visionary or impracticable; they have been adopted and carried on with success: and I rejoice that I live to record their existence and prosperity.

Abridged accounts of many of my Missionary journeys have been given to the public, in the reports of the Unitarian Fund Committee; still it is thought that a Review of the whole, written more connectedly, which shall not be a mere repetition of what has been before communicated; but a deliberate though compressed view of the author's Missionary life, including a variety of circumstances not stated in any former account, will be acceptable to the Unitarian public; and that it may excite the attention of christians of other denominations, and promote the Unitarian cause. It may serve to refute the charge brought against Unitarians, if not already sufficiently refuted, that they have no zeal, and show the falseness of the assertion, that Unitarianism is not a religion suited to the poor and unlearned. The composition and publication of this work, I regard as a debt due from me to the Unitarian public, and in par-

ticular to the supporters of the Unitarian Fund, and as forming a proper close to my labors as a perpetual Missionary of that valuable Institution.

The peculiar circumstances in which I commenced my labors as a missionary, may be thought to add interest to the following account of them. I had difficulties to encounter which cannot well fall to the lot of another person acting in the same capacity, especially in the early part of my course. In many places, I had entirely new ground to break up, where I knew of no person friendly to the cause in which I was engaged. At that time bigotry was more rampant, and an intolerant spirit more fierce, among some parties of christians, than at present. The friends of Unitarianism were not so numerous as they have since become; and missionary plans were too novel, and those who acted upon them too little known, to obtain the countenance of Unitarians generally. The Unitarian Fund not existing, when I commenced the work, there was no public institution to which a missionary could look for countenance and support. The penal laws against Unitarians were then in force; the discourses I preached, and the tracts I circulated every where, with my name to them, had the laws been executed, would in England have subjected me to confiscation of goods and imprisonment, and in Scotland to an ignominous death; but happily these laws have since been repealed

It is hoped this work may contribute to the information of Unitarians, respecting the spread of Unitarianism, and the increase of their own denomination of christians; and so encourage them, and excite among them an increase of zeal: and serve to show the falseness of the representation which some Trinitarians continue to give, that Unitarians are few and insignificant, and their cause dwindling away and ready to expire.

Since I found it necessary, on account of the approach of the evening of life, to withdraw from the incessant labors of a perpetual missionary, I have felt a pleasure in recalling the scenes and proceedings, and in meditating upon the occurrences, of former years of constant activity, and inproving the leisure which the duties of a local situation have allowed, in calmly and deliberately reviewing my life as a missionary. The doing of this has enlivened the remembrance of many highly esteemed friends in various parts of the country, with whom I took sweet counsel, and had pleasing and edifying intercourse, most of whom, in all probability, I shall see no more in this life. The following pages may, if read by such persons, revive recollections which will not be unpleasant, and feelings which it will be useful to cherish. The review of past transactions, has sometimes been deeply affecting; many friends whom I loved, who assisted in our plans, are laid in the silent tomb; painful changes have taken place in the circumstances of

others, and in the state of some congregations: some persons from whom we hoped for good have disappointed us; but such is the state of things in this world: yet, generally, things have continued to proceed in an encouraging manner: and pleasing and consolatory is the thought, that God makes all things work for good, that his gracious plans are always going on, and that all things shall promote them. Those friends who countenanced or, in any way, assisted me in my labors, in different parts of the kingdom, though I should not have the pleasure of seeing them any more on this side of the grave, I shall ever remember with affection; and, I trust, we shall meet hereafter in a better state of existence, and renew our friendship amid the bright and glorious scenes of immortality.

It would have been easy to have made this work much larger; but my object has been to compress it as much as possible, consistently with my design in composing it; and to say only so much as seemed necessary, to enable the reader to form a proper estimate of Unitarian missions, and of the present state of the Unitarian cause, so far as I have been concerned, or can speak from personal knowledge. My study has been to state facts without any coloring, to speak of things precisely as they are. I may have made some mistakes, if I have, they are perfectly involuntarily, I have suffered none knowingly to escape me.

What I have written I now submit to the attention of my friends and the public; praying that God may make it useful to the great cause of pure evangelical truth and righteousness: and remain the reader's servant in the gospel.

R. W.

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The Author did expect the Work would have been in the hands of the Subscribers at an earlier period; but various circumstances have occurred which prevented it; and among the rest, is, the extension of the Book to 100 pages more than he at first contemplated; this he trusts will not render the Work less acceptable to the Subscribers and the Public.

R. W.

A Review,

&c.

INTRODUCTION.

CONSIDERING myself merely as an instrument in the hands of that great Being, who is the author of all good, and who worketh by whatever instruments he pleaseth, I shall, without hesitation give an account of what he hath done by me. I hope my doing this may encourage others, whatever difficulties they may have to encounter, to attempt to promote the knowledge of the pure gospel, the information and improvement of mankind. In venturing upon

an office in which no person in this country had before engaged, and laboring with success in that office, I find no cause for glorying in myself; for it was God who qualified me for it, disposed and led me by a combination of circumstances to engage in it, and it was his blessing which crowned my exertions with success. I am fully conscious that my services have been very defective, and that I have abundant reason to be humbled before God, for not having more diligently improved the talents committed to my trust. In reviewing my Missionary labors, whatever cause I find to rejoice, I am constrained to say, I am nothing, God is all; "Not I, but the grace of God which was with me."

The hand of God is the more visible in the good which has been effected, on account of the meanness of the instrument by whom it has been effected, and the great disadvantages under which he labored, especially when he first entered

upon the work. Without the advantages of a regular education, without any pretensions to superior talents, without any thing commanding either in his person or voice, without knowing much of the world, in quite humble circumstances, unknown to the Unitarian public, and acquainted with very few persons who were Unitarians, an obscure individual, prompted by the desire of promoting what he believed to be the truth of God, resolved on commencing, though on a very small scale, the work of an Unitarian Missionary. This was before the Unitarian Fund existed, or he had heard that such an institution was so much as thought of. Without any rich and powerful friends to support him, unpatronized in the work, he began and went on for some time, extending his labors to as great a distance from the place of his residence as circumstances rendered practicable. At length the Unitarian Fund was planned and established, and he had the

honor, of becoming one of its first Missionaries. This furnished him with the means of extending his exertions to more distant parts of the country; and, sanctioned and supported by the Committee of that Institution, he proceeded in the work with advantages which he could not otherwise have enjoyed. A review of the life and labors of this Missionary now follows.

CHAPTER I.

A Review of the circumstances which prepared the Author for the work, and led to his becoming a Missionary.

BELIEVING all things to be arranged and directed by the Almighty, and considering what I have done as an Unitarian Missionary to be the principal work of my life, I cannot avoid concluding that God had a view to my being fitted for that work, in the formation of my person, the natural constitution and powers which he gave me, and in all his dealings with me, till I was qualified for and actually engaged in it.

1.

The work to which the most effective years of my life have been devoted, rendered a particular constitution both of body and mind necessary to endure the fatigue and privations to which it subjected me, and to make the various

OCT 10 1911 CAMBRIDGE

and incessant exertions it required: and a susceptibility of particular impressions and feelings, to prompt and lead me on in the work, was equally necessary. Such a constitution God gave me, and such a susceptibility appears to have been natural to me. On no other ground can I account for certain impressions and aspirings of mind which I felt even in my childhood. Judging from the circumstances in which I was born and spent my early years, my life seemed destined to pass away in the most humble obscurity, there appeared no way open in which I could rise to any thing superior, make any attainments or exertions which should either distinguish me or benefit my fellow creatures: yet even then I felt, that in such an obscure, and, as I thought, uninteresting station in life, I could not be contented and happy. I panted to emerge from the lowly vale where I was placed, and to do what would give me some distinction and render me of some value in

society; and was sometimes lost in childish musing on the subject. These I conceive to have been the workings of an infant mind, which God had designed should be employed on subjects the most momentous, and in a work the most important.

2.

From my infancy God in his providence placed me under that discipline, and led me through those circumstances, which trained me to close application, patient and persevering exertion, and prepared me to endure toil, difficulty and hardness; and which at the same time kept the powers of my mind lively and active, and cherished a thirst for knowledge, and a desire of rising to a sphere of action superior to what appearances seemed to encourage the hope of attaining. It may be questioned, whether, without the previous discipline I had been under, I could have reconciled myself to all the fatigue and exertion of my missionary life.

3.

Religious impressions, and the desire of religious knowledge, are among my earliest recollections; how they were first produced I know not, having no remembrance of the time when I was without them. My mind naturally tended to serious thought, and led me to take pleasure in reading and meditation. I was soon troubled, and sometimes felt anguish of spirit, because I could not understand some things which I heard insisted on as essential to christianity, and necessary to salvation. But it is not my intention, in this work, to give an account of the operations of my mind, and my religious conflicts in early life: suffice it to say, that with such a natural cast of mind, under a sense of the importance of religion, and in such a state of feeling, ignorant as I was of the clashing opinions of religious parties, I was likely to receive with ardor the first system which was presented to me, in a pliusable shape, with

a show of scripture proof, by persons of whose good sense and piety I had a high opinion. This accordingly took place.

4.

The system so presented to my view was Calvinism; to which, when about fifteen years of age, I became a convert. I soon made myself pretty well acquainted with this system, and the common arguments by which it is supported. It was proper Calvinism, not what is now called moderate Calvinism. Believing it to be the truth of God, and fearlessly following it out, I felt its genuine impressions, its heart-withering influence. I was enveloped in its horrid gloom, and passed through its dismal shades. It marred the pleasures of my juvenile years and substituted sadness of soul in the place of youthful cheerfulness, which it in a great measure destroyed. I had indeed some bright days while a Calvinist; for the light of the gospel sometimes glimmered upon

me, though eclipsed it was not totally extinguished, now and then its rays broke through the surrounding darkness. Still I thank God that I was once a Calvinist, that I have known by experience what Calvinism is. It was one important step in my progress. However erroneous, its peculiar doctrines are perverted truths, and some precious metal may be extracted from the baser materials. I received some impressions and ideas among Calvinists which I still deem valuable. Probably I should never have felt so deeply the value of Unitarianism, nor have been so zealous for its promotion, had I not passed through the intricate and perplexing regions of reputed orthodoxy: certainly I should not have been so well qualified to feel for, and instruct those who are still wandering in that frightful labyrinth. Among the Calvinists I acquired the habit of extemporary preaching, which was essentially necessary when I became a Missionary; which,

probably, I might not have acquired, had I been brought np among Unitarians.

5.

As further means of information presented themselves, and I became more acquainted with religious parties and systems, I was led to a more careful examination of the scriptures. The consequence of this was, that I soon became dissatisfied with the system which I had adopted, and, when about nineteen years of age, renounced Calvinism. This involved me in some trouble, and in much controversy with the members of the church with which till this time I had been connected. They regarded me as an apostate from the true faith; and, though I withdrew from them, they in a formal manner excommunicated me. This church was of the denomination called Independants. A dissolution of the bonds of union and friendship with my earliest religious connections, persons whom I

had highly valued, and the being subjected to their censures, on account of the change which had taken place in my opinions, was extremely painful; but it helped to prepare me to meet with composure the censorious and illiberal treatment I have since had to experience from different religious parties.

6.

I did not go at once from Calvinism to Unitarianism; but merely became an arminian. This at the time was deemed a great departure from orthodoxy. The entire change of my religious views was the work of several years. I first gave up one doctrine of reputed orthodoxy, then another, and proceeded gradually till I had given up the whole of that system, and became what I now am. In my progress I passed through different religious connections, and examined the different religious systems as well as I was able. In going from Trinitarianism to Unitarianism I became

a Sabellian and continued such for several years; at length having advanced beyond that hypothesis, the Sabellians excommunicated me as a blasphemer of the Son of God. Arianism I examined; but it never appeared to me to be consistent with the scriptures. Whatever, after deliberate examination, appeared to me to be truth I openly and fearlessly avowed, regardless of the consequences to which my doing so might subject me; for throughout I was impressed with the value and importance of truth, and resolved to follow it, to whatever views my inquiries might lead me. I was persuaded that if I regarded any thing more than truth, even life itself, I was not fit to be a Minister of Jesus Christ. The controversies in which I was for many years involved, the conflicts of mind which I passed through in the course of my inquiries and religious progress, the treatment which I received from different religious parties, the sacrifices which integrity and an open

avowal of what I believed to be the truth rendered unavoidable, what I learned by experience in the different scenes through which God in his providence conducted me, all combined to prepare me for the difficult and arduous work of an Unitarian Missionary. I have seen reason to be thankful to my heavenly Father, for the whole of the discipline under which he placed me, however painful any part of it might be, by which he trained me up for the work which he designed I should do.

7.

Having at length attained such views of christianity as appeared to me perfectly rational, every way consistent with the acknowledged character and perfections of God, as the soul could rest upon with entire satisfaction, and as seemed calculated to make all men virtuous and happy; in other words, being fully convinced that Unitarianism was the doctrine of the gospel; I felt

an ardent desire to communicate those views to others, to spread the Unitarian doctrine as extensively as possible. I had learned that Unitarians were found chiefly among the more opulent and well educated parts of society, and heard it asserted that Unitarianism neither was nor could be the religion of the common people, of the poor and unlearned. It struck me that if this assertion was well founded, Unitarianism must be something very different from genuine christianty, that, though now confined to the more cultivated parts of society, if identical with genuine christianity, it must be capable of becoming the religion of the mass of the people. I could not admit the above assertion to be correct; for I had no doubt left that Unitarianism was the doctrine of the gospel, and therefore was fully persuaded, not only that it was capable of being the religion of the poor and unlearned, but that it was better suited to them than any other religious system. I could discover no

difference between the doctrines preached by Jesus and his Apostles, when the common people heard them gladly, and when multitudes of the poor and unlearned were converted by their preaching, and those of modern Unitarianism: nor could I find, in the evangelical writings, those doctrines which are the most popular among modern christians. After the most careful attention, I could see nothing in the doctrines believed by Unitarians which the poor and unlearned might not easily understand, if brought to attend to them seriously; they appeared to be on a perfect level with their capacity, to require nothing which they were incapable of doing, and to be suited to their moral and spiritual wants. Hence I was brought to the conclusion, that the reason why Unitarianism was not then the religion of the poor and unlearned, was not to be found in the doctrine itself, but in circumstances entirely distinct from it. I could discover no reason why, if preached to them as

the doctrine of the Gospel, in a plain and popular style, Unitarianism should not be understood and received by them, and become their religion. I determined, at all events, to make the experiment, on as large a scale as I possibly could. I had been accustomed to preach to the poor, I thought that God had particularly qualified me for it, and I felt more pleasuse in preaching to them than to any other description of persons. With these views, cherishing hopes of success which have not been disappointed, I became an Unitarian Missionary, when the prospect was very far from having the encouraging appearance which now animates our exertions.

8.

Some of the few Unitarians with whom I was at that time acquainted, thought it impracticable to convert the poor and unlearned to Unitarianism, and regarded the attempt as visionary; but this did not discourage me from proceeding.

The following considerations appeared to me so weighty, and the object so important, that whatever was said on the opposite side seemed of no force, to be like the light dust on the balance. I shall state them the more fully on account of the influence they have had upon me, from first to last, as a Missionary. Genuine christiantity is designed to be universal, it is destined to be the religion of the whole world. God, with whom it originated, and who gave it, is equally the Father of all, and being an impartial and good Father, he must necessarily have intended this best of his gifts for the whole of his great family. But if intended to be universal, or even to become the religion of the mass of the people in any age or country, it must be suited to the poor and unlearned; for they form a large proportion of the great mass in every age and country; it must be on a level with their understanding and capacity; it must be suited to their leisure, and can require

nothing but what they are capable of doing. That the gospel is on a level with the understanding and capacity of the poor and unlearned, the sure words of prophecy, the plain declarations of the New Testament, and the evidence of facts fully prove. The words of prophecy, anticipating gospel times, describe the path of life which should be opened as an high-way, in which the wayfaring man, though a fool, a plain unlearned person, should not err. Our Lord mentioned as one of the proofs o his divine mission, in connection with those which were miraculous, that the poor had the gospel preached to them; and he devoutly thanked God his Father, that he had revealed it to those whom the reputed wise and prudent of that age thought mere babes. It is recorded that the common people heard him gladly; but is it likely they would have done this had they not in some degree understood him, and been interested by what he taught? Who were our

Lord's first disciples? were the learned, the wealthy, and the great? So far from it, that those who listened attentively to his gracious words were pronounced, by the Jewish rulers, ignorant of the law and accursed. The great Apostle of the Gentiles said; "Ye see your calling brethren, how that not many wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called: but God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things that are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, yea and things which are not, hath God chosen, to bring to nought things that are: that no flesh should glory in his presence." The gospel and its influences and blessings, like the light of heaven, the vital air, and the fruits of the earth are suited to all men. As the light of heaven is suited to every eye, so the gospel is calculated to enlighten every mind. As the vital air is fit for all

to breathe, so the vital influence of the gospel is capable of being felt in every heart. As the fruits of the earth are calculated to nourish and support life in all, so the doctrine of Christ, which is the true bread from heaven, is calculated to nourish all to everlasting life. If the Unitarian doctrine be the doctrine of the gospel, it follows that the above remarks are strictly applicable to the Unitarian doctrine, and perfectly true of it. If Unitarianism be genuine christianity, it must be as suitable to the common people as primitive christianity was, being in fact the same thing. The above remarks express sentiments which I have seen verified by facts. In numerous instances have I seen the objection to Unitarianism, that it is incapable of being the religion of the poor and unlearned, refuted by the best of all proofs, by its actually becoming the religion of many of them, in various parts of the kingdom, and producing in them that temper and conduct which

all good men will acknowledge to be the genuine fruit of vital christianity.

9.

Some persons whom I highly respect, who have all along approved of our plans, and wished them all possible success, thought at first that I was too sanguine in my expectations of success: facts, however have proved, much to their satisfaction, that they were mistaken. Though not naturally of a sanguine temper, the conviction which I felt of the power of truth, and that the Unitarian doctrine was evangelical truth, that, consequently, it must approve itself to every impartial person who was really desirous of knowing the truth, raised in my mind very sanguine hopes of success. Had I not cherished such hopes, it is likely, I should not have entered on the work of an Unitarian Missionary, in the circumstances and amidst all the difficulties in which I commenced it: nor have I been dis-

appointed. In different parts of this Island, where, till within the last few years, Unitarianism was unknown, or if heard of, it was only as a chilling blast, which produced torpidness and death, so far as its influence extended; as a refined system of infidelity, whose proper classification was with Deism and Atheism, and which was still more dangerous, because more specious and deceptious; where the people sat in darkness and in the region and shadow of death under the baleful influence of the doctrines of reputed orthodoxy; where many who thought a little, disgusted with the popular notions, and the spirit of those who professed them, stood trembling on the brink of infidelity, while others had plunged into the fatal gulf; in different parts of this Island where till of late such was the state of things, the light of Unitarianism is sprung up, and many who sat in darkness now rejoice in this heavenly light; many an unbeliever has been brought

back to the christian fold; and many Unitarian churches have been planted consisting chiefly of the poor and unlearned.

Some particulars respecting these things, and the way in which they have been effected will be found in the following chapters.

CHAPTER II.

Introduction of Unitarianism in the North-east district:—Missionary labors prior to the establishment of the Unitarian Fund.

WHAT is here called the North-east district, includes the western parts of Norfolk, the northern parts of Cambridgeshire, and nearly the whole of Lincolnshire. At the period of which I have now to speak, Unitarianism appears to have had no existence in this district.

1.

About thirty years since, when I became minister of the congregation in Wisbeach, which afterwards received the Unitarian doctrine, though my views of some subjects were not exactly what they now are, I was on the whole an Unitarian: and not long after was disowned as such by the Sabellian churches, known by the name of Johnsonians, (excepting by the one in Wisbeach of

which I was minister) among whom I had acted for some years as one of their leading ministers.

My situation in Wisbeach was at first, and continued for some years, an extremely difficult one. In the congregation there was not a single Unitarian. The members of it were Sabellians, they denied the doctrine of hereditary guilt and depravity; but retained most of the doctrines of Calvinism. They were most of them very illiberal and bigoted. I knew not where to look for an Unitarian, either in the town, or in the surrounding district within forty miles of it; if there were any individuals who were such I had not heard of them. I had no connexion, nor even acquaintance with Unitarians in other parts of the kingdom: my intercourse with them did not commence until some years after. Excluded from my old religious connexions, on account of what were deemed my heretical opinions, for a considerable time I had none out of my

own congregation. My income being small, and having a young family, I found it necessary to open a school, which I conducted ten years, when on account of ill health, and an increase of other labors, I relinquished it. Thus situated, it was a work of no small difficulty to bring a congregation to give up doctrines which they had long regarded as essential to salvation, and to receive others which they had been accustomed to view with alarm and horror. This work I thought it my duty to attempt, and ultimately succeeded in accomplishing it.

2.

It may not be uninteresting briefly to state the plans adopted, and the course pursued, to effect a revolution in the religious views and feelings of the people among whom I regularly officiated. I was well aware that, if effected at all, it must be a work of considerable time, that every thing desirable to be

done must not be attempted at once, that he who would do much good must make up his mind to suffer some evil, and that patience and persevering exertion were essentially necessary. The people with whom I had to do having been in the habit of laying an undue stress on their own opinions, and of thinking that those who differed from them were not christians and could not be saved; my first object was to impress them with a sense of the value of piety, integrity, virtue and goodness, with whatever opinions associated, that I might bring them off from their narrow views, from regarding right notions as absolutely necessary to salvation; and to convince them that God will never condemn upright and good men; at the same time guarding against weakening their sense of the value of religious truth. It was my aim, both in public and private, to teach them liberality of sentiment, to show them the duty and necessity of candor and christian charity,

to imbue them with the principles of religious liberty, and to excite in them a spirit of free and fearless inquiry. What I had suffered from the illiberality and bigotry of others made me the more zealous in doing this; and I was fully persuaded that I could do nothing to purpose any further than I succeeded in these points. Doctrines which were to them new, aud which would alarm their prejudices, were brought forward gradually, first one, then another, with as much caution and regard to their feelings and prejudices, as integrity and truth would allow. Time was given them for deliberate thought, and to make up their minds upon one subject before another was urged upon their attention. Care was taken to show them the practical value of those doctrines which were new to them, and the vital influence of christian truth kept in view. Their narrow and unscriptural plans of discipline were broken in upon by little and little, until an entire

change in that respect was effected. Weekly conferences were kept up, at which all who attended had opportunity of making what inquiries they pleased, and of stating their thoughts freely upon any subject. These were of great use. Most of the books in the New Testament, and some of those in the Old, were read regularly, in convenient portions, and explained as a part of the public services on the Sunday in the morning and afternoon, and lectures frequently on given subjects, delivered on Sunday evenings. A week evening lecture was kept up, which was frequently explanatory of some part of scripture. The explaining of the scriptures in public did much good. Great care was taken to keep up freedom of intercourse with all parts of the congregation, by frequently visiting and conversing with them; and proper methods adopted to gain and preserve their affection and confidence. Lectures were delivered to the children and young people by

themselves. The minister's visits, if in an evening, were generally concluded with prayer. It was absolutely necessary to be blind and deaf to many uncharitable and censorious remarks, which were made by individuals, and to many instances of unkind treatment; and to guard against giving the least pretext for any one to say that he was treated with harshness and illiberality. Success could not be looked for without overcoming evil with good; and by forbearance and kindness those who opposed me were sometimes softened, and continued friends.

As might be expected, many severe conflicts of opinion, many hard struggles against what was called innovation, and frequently unpleasant circumstances took place. Some persons left us because reputed orthodox doctrines and plans were given up, and what they called new and strange doctrines and novel plans introduced. Some attempted to form a party in the congregation, and

not being able to do it, went off. Some thought my preaching too practical, which they called legal preaching. I had in the midst of these struggles many painful days, and sleepless nights. At one time things were in such a state as led me to think it probable that my labors would turn out fruitless, and that I should be rejected by the only congregation with which I had any connexion. In these circumstances, I was led to reflect that I was where God in his providence had placed me, that he knew every thing which would befal me when he placed me there, that all things are directed by him in wisdom and goodness, that I had only to do whatever appeared to me to be right and good, and leave the rest to him, that he would support me and make all things work for my good. I was enabled to cast my cares upon him, determined to persevere, he carried me through all the difficulties, and crowned my labors with success.

Without going into more particulars, suffice it to say, that, after a few years, the congregation became completely Unitarian, adopted liberal plans, and enjoyed a long season of uninterrupted peace. I had made up my mind not to remove from Wisbeach till I thought the Unitarian cause firmly established there: hence I declined several invitations to other congregations, where the income would have been larger, and in one instance more than double what it was in Wisbeach. Though at one time I was very unpopular, during the last few years of my residence in that town I became more popular than I had ever before been. Though there was a time when the congregation would have been glad had I voluntarily left them, their attachment to me afterwards became stronger than it had ever before been; and the affection between us I believe to be such as can never cease so long as reason and memory remain. During our severest struggles and greatest difficulties,

I had their esteem and confidence in no low degree. This probably had considerable influence in keeping us together. When I finally resigned my office among them, I had the pleasure of leaving the congregation in a better state than I found it when I became the minister; though in the interval a number of families had removed either to America, or to other parts of England, some had left us on account of sentiment, and some had become extinct by death. I have been the more particular in the account of my labors in Wisbeach, because it was the first scene of my exertions as a teacher of Unitarianism, and the congregation the first fruits of Unitarianism in the North-east district.

3

The next place to which my exertions were extended was Sutton in Lincolnshire, between nine and ten miles from Wisbeach. The congregation at Sutton had received the doctrine of universal

restoration, its members were generally liberal, and disposed to free inquiry on religious subjects; though on most points their views were what is called orthodox. This congregation being without a minister, after I had been a few years in Wisbeach, invited me to preach among them occasionally; and when I had done so a few times, they requested to have my services as frequently as would be convenient to me. So long as they remained without a minister, I supplied them, as often as I could, on a Sunday morning, and returned to Wisbeach to preach in the afternoon and evening. I also conducted a week evening lecture among them for a considerable time. This lecture I continued after they had a minister fixed with them, and also exchanged with their minister one Sunday in the month. I soon became quite intimate with this congregation. After I gave up my school, I had time to visit and converse much with them on religious subjects. I then established oc-

casional meetings in several places in the neighborhood for the free discussion of theological subjects. The result of these exertions was the conversion of the Sutton congregation to Unitarianism. This was the second church in the district which became Unitarians.

4.

During the former part of the period I am reviewing, I had some acquaintance with the Arminian Baptists, and preached occasionally in several of their chapels. I also assisted in turn with several of their ministers in conducting an evening lecture in a village six miles from Wisbeach. But they soon discovered that I was too heretical to be allowed to act with them, or to enter their pulpits.

5

When it was generally known that I was an avowed Unitarian, strange rumors were soon afloat respecting what

I believed, and what I did not believe. The most absurd construction was put upon my words, and I was sometimes charged with saying things which I had not even thought of. Every possible method was used to frighten persons from hearing me, from reading any thing which I wrote, and even from conversing with me. I was described as a most dangerous man, and credit was given me for talents to which I did not pretend, in order to persuade people that I was capable of deceiving them. It was said that I was so artful, and so capable of twisting things about, and of giving them a specious coloring, that those who heard me, or talked with me were sure to be misled: but, it was sometimes added, that the devil always employs such agents, that the first instrument he employed to deceive mankind was a serpent. A person once told a pretty large company, in my hearing, that my art and address was such, that, if I undertook to prove that black

was white, I should make them believe it. Though I had never preached on politics, nor shown myself in any public way in political matters, there were persons who insinuated that I was an enemy to the government, I was charged with rejecting the scriptures, denying Christ, and being a mere deist. Idle tales and misrepresentations were circulated to discredit my ministry and the doctrines which I taught. In the midst of all I had one consolation, my moral character was never attacked, nor was I charged with treating those who differed from me with illiberality; but it was said, that Unitarians had the art of commanding their temper and using soft words, that they might the better deceive others.

The meetings which we had, in different places for conversation, free discussion, &c. gave me an opportunity of explaining my views when they were misrepresented, and of sometimes counteracting the effects of false rumors.

Some persons would come to those meetings out of curiosity, and some with a view to entangle me, or to find something to report to my disadvantage: hence it was necessary to use caution and prudence in answering some inquirers. Being once asked, in a mixed company, by one who did not seem to be seeking information, "How Christ had glory with the Father before the world was?" I said, I will answer your question if you tell me, how Abraham was made the father of many nations before he was really the father of one child? for God said, "I have made thee the Father of many nations," when as yet he had not a son. Not I *will make* thee hereafter, but I *have made thee* the father of many nations. He readily admitted that it could only mean, that he was such in the view of God, and in his purpose: as Paul saith, that he was the father of many nations before him who quickeneth the dead, and calleth things that are not as though they were. I then

said, as Abraham was the father of many nations before he had a son, so Christ had glory with the Father before the world was; that is, in the view and purpose of God. Why else did Jesus say, *which I had with thee,* if he did not mean, in thy view and purpose? Had he been speaking of glory which he literally and personally possessed, would it not have been sufficient to have said, *which I had,* without adding *with thee?* And had he actually possessed the glory before the world was, how could it have been the reward of a work done by him upon earth?

6.

As my acquaintance and connection with my late highly valued friend, Mr. W. Vidler, had an influence upon the subsequent part of my life; in particular as it proved the means of introducing me to many of those persons with whom I have since had the pleasure of acting; it will be proper to give some account of the commencement and progress of

that acquaintance. In the year 1797, Mr. Vidler began to publish a periodical work, called the Universalist's Miscellany. In the latter part of the above year, a Query appeared in the Miscellany respecting the doctrine of election, and its connection with the final happiness of all men. To this Query I replied in a series of letters to the Editor; which were afterwards republished by my friends in Scotland, and went through two editions. My writing the above letters, led to my acquaintance and connection with Mr. V., to whom I was before unknown.

In the summer of 1798, I received an invitation to spend some time with him and his friends in London, and to supply for him a few Sundays, while he went a journey into Sussex. With this invitation I complied. At this time our religious views differed considerably; yet we soon became intimate and much attached to each other. The circumstances through which we had passed were

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somewhat similar. We had both been excluded from our former religious connections on account of our opinions, the fearless avowal of what we believed to be the truth; and had as yet formed no new ones, beyond our own limited circles. We had both labored under the disadvantage of having all our information and improvement to attain without the assistance of tutors. We had both suffered from the bigotry and intolerance of others, and felt an ardent love of liberty and free inquiry, and thirst for further information. We both, at the time, had to encounter many difficulties. Hence we felt much sympathy with each other, and a friendship commenced between us which continued, without interruption, till death removed my friend, whose memory I shall ever cherish with much respect and affection. I believe our intercourse was mutually beneficial, and my acquaintance and connection with him extended my sphere and means of usefulness, as well as promoted my improvement.

When I first visited Mr. V. and his congregation, neither he nor they were Unitarians. After having preached among them several Sundays, and conversed on various subjects with different persons, I received an anonymous letter, which showed that I had excited some alarm; for the writer warned me of the danger of Socinianism. Mr. V. also in the early part of our correspondence, though his letters were always liberal and friendly, could not help sometimes expressing his fears, and showing that he was alarmed at the idea of what he called Socinianism.

For several years I continued to spend a short time in the summer with Mr. V. and his congregation. During those visits, we investigated and discussed many theological subjects, and carefully examined many parts of scripture together: and I could perceive that my friend kept receding more and more from reputed orthodoxy. He in turn visited me and my congregation, and

preached to large audiences, both in Wisbeach and in other places in the neighborhood. His visit did much good. During his stay in Wisbeach the time was chiefly spent in the free discussion of theological subjects, large parties being usually collected for the purpose. Once, after an evening so spent, he said to me "If I stay here much longer you will make a Socinian of me." The subject discussed that evening had been the person of Christ, and the question had been urged by my brother, Did the real Christ actually die? Mr. V. replied, His human nature died. On which my brother said, The question related to his real person, whatever natures might constitute that person, did the real person who is called Christ actually die? Mr. V. evidently perceived the force of the argument arising from the death of Christ in support of the doctrine of his proper humanity; he said, jocosely, "Thereunto hangs a tale," and declined giving any further answer.

Once when I was on a visit to Mr. V.

Mr. B. who was then one of his congregation, and an occasional preacher, and who has now for many years been an acceptable and useful minister, proposed that Mr. V. and I should spend an afternoon at his house that we might discuss the doctrine of the pre-existence of Christ, for which Mr. B. was then an advocate, and he requested us to go early that we might have time to go fully into the subject. When the time came, and we arrived at Mr. B.'s house, he requested that we might enter upon the discussion proposed, immediately, which we accordingly did; and the following is the substance of what passed.

"As you are an advocate for the doctrine of the pre-existence of Christ, and undertake to defend it, will you, Mr. B., choose your ground, by stating what you think the strongest proof that Christ pre existed?"

"I shall take our Lord's words, John xvii. 5. *And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self, with the glory*

which I had with thee before the world was."

"You think the text you mention the best ground you can take to support the pre existence of Christ."

"Yes, I do."

"Then will you allow me to ask you a few questions respecting the glory mentioned in the text on which you build the doctrine in question?"

"Certainly; you may ask me as many questions respecting it as you please."

"Is not the glory for which Christ prayed, in the text which you have mentioned, the same glory which the apostles afterwards spoke of as actually received by him?"

"I must answer that question in the affirmative, it undoubtedly is the same glory."

Let me ask further, Did not Christ pray for this glory as the reward of a work done by him upon earth; and did not the apostles speak of it as given to

him as the reward of what he did and suffered upon earth?"

"I must again answer in the affirmative."

"Before you do that, look at the matter again, and be careful how you answer; for I shall probably make some use of your answer."

"Whatever use you may make of it, I must answer in the affirmative; for Christ evidently prayed for the glory as the reward of a work which he had done upon earth, and the apostles spoke of it as the reward of his obedience and sufferings." [Mr. B. then referred to several texts in the New Testament, which constrained him thus to answer.]

"Then, Sir, here is another question; How could the glory which Christ is supposed to have possessed before he appeared upon earth, or had done any part of the work, and which he might have continued to possess, had he not laid it aside voluntarily, though he had never either appeared upon earth, or

done any part of the work spoken of, possible to be the reward of a work done by him upon earth, of his obedience and suffering?"

"There I am fast, I cannot answer that question, and will say nothing more on the subject at present."

"Do not stop, Sir, I have several more questions to ask, which will affect the ground of argument which you have chosen."

"I shall say no more on the subject, till I can get over the difficulty which you have started, which I cannot at present."

About a year after, Mr. B. met me again, when he informed me, that he had given up the doctrine of the pre-existence of Christ.

At different times and on a variety of subjects, I participated in interesting discussions, and edifying conversations, in the visits which I made with Mr. V. among his friends; but it would swell this work too much to go into the particulars of them.

7

The next place in the North east district, where an Unitarian church was formed, was Boston, in Lincolnshire, Mr. Platts, who had been a Calvinist minister in that town, became an Universalist and an Unitarian; and, in consequence of his openly avowing Universalism and Unitarianism, lost his old congregation, and the income he received as a minister, which was his whole support. However he continued to preach at Boston, and, having collected some new hearers, invited me to visit them, which I did, and frequently repeated my visit. I gave them a letter of advice respecting forming themselves into a society, which was published in the Universalist's Miscellany. I also assisted with Mr. Vidler in their settlement as a congregation, and the settlement of Mr. Platts among them as their minister. At another time, I assisted with Mr. Wellbeloved at the opening of a chapel which they erected. From my

first knowing the Boston people, I had much intercourse with them, preached frequently among them, and did what I could for their improvement and establishment as an Unitarian congregation.

In my early visits to Boston, the people being full of inquiry, and many subjects being new to them, I was much engaged, frequently in large parties, in explaining the scriptures and various parts of theology.

There was an old minister, who had resided in Boston many years, who was an Unitarian; but he could not properly be called an Unitarian minister, for he never ministered Unitarianism. This old gentleman found fault with Mr. Platts for openly avowing his sentiments, and asked him, why he could not be an Universalist and an Unitarian without declaring it to the congregation, and making a stir in the town about it?

This minister, by his still plans, not disturbing others by preaching the doctrines which he believed, brought his

congregation to nothing, buried the last member of it, and after officiating about forty years, retired to spend the evening of his life in repose, having no people to minister to; the old chapel in which he had been minister was pulled down; at length he died also, and was buried; so ends his history. On the contrary Mr. Platts, by publicly avowing, and preaching openly what he believed to be the truth of God, and by pursuing active plans to promote it, raised a congregation, which has so increased as to find it necessary to leave their first chapel for a much larger one. Such facts show the practical tendency and effects of the opposite plans of concealment and open avowal, of indifference and zealous activity.

8.

Soon after the commencement of the Unitarian cause at Boston, my labors were extended to more distant parts of Lincolnshire. In the city of Lincoln

at this time there was no Unitarian congregation, nor place of public worship. The Presbyterian chapel was in the hands of the Calvinists. These were a few persons who were either Unitarians, or favorable to the Unitarian doctrine; and also a few Universalists who soon after became Unitarians. In these circumstances I visited that city, spent some days there, and delivered a short series of discourses on doctrinal subjects, in the General Baptist Chapel, which has for many years been in the hands of the Calvinists; but no minister was then fixed in it.

The discourses were well attended and well received. I was treated during my stay with much friendship and hospitality, and had a great deal of theological conversation with different persons. From that time I occasionally visited Lincoln and preached there. I have reason to think my first visit did good. An Unitarian society was formed not long after, the Presbyterian chapel

taken out of the hands of the Calvinists, to whom it had been lent, and an Unitarian Minister settled in it. This was the fourth Unitarian church established in the district.

About the time that I visited Lincoln, I preached at Sleaford, a market town eighteen miles from that city, and at Hackthorn, a village a few miles from it; but nothing particular arose from my exertions in these places; though at the time, some impression seemed to be made on a Calvinist at the former, and at the latter great part of a night was spent in debate.

9.

Another part of the county of Lincoln to which my labors were extended, soon after the introduction of Unitarianism at Boston, was the north marshes. This is a district of the county situated between the hills and the sea, near the mouth of the Humber, and along the side of that river. It is a wild

part of the country, the roads in it are extremely bad, and the inhabitants in a low state of cultivation, but hospitable and friendly. My journey to these marshes and back to Wisbeach where I resided, in the circuitous route I had to pursue, made a distance of an hundred and sixty miles; and I performed it many times. Mr. Vidler once visited this part of the country; but he staid a very short time, and intimated that to instruct the people there would be more in my way than in his. The people whom I visited lived in scattered villages, extending over a considerable tract of country. The accommodations were what many persons would have called mean, and have thought them inconvenient; but to me they were sufficiently comfortable, and the affectionate behavior of the people more than compensated for want of luxuries and elegancies.

Those who became our friends had been Methodists, and were put out of the Methodist society for expressing

their doubts respecting eternal punishment; to which doubts they had been led by a Methodist preacher who was secretly an Universalist. In other respects they retained the popular notions.

They were illiterate, and completely without information; but simple-hearted, teachable, pious and affectionate. The Methodists in the north marshes were ignorant and overbearing. Being numerous, and there being very few regular Dissenters in that part of the country, they carried things with a high hand, and acted as if they thought that, by going there, I was invading a territory which ought to be exclusively theirs. Some of the persons with whom I became acquainted had strong sense, could reason closely, and soon made considerable progress in the understanding of religious subjects

When I visited the marshes, I usually preached in several villages, sometimes as many as seven or eight, and had generally many attentive hearers. Persons

would come from a considerable distance, and some would stay a great part of the night, and keep me engaged in conversation. I found one man who had become an Unitarian by reading Penn's "Sandy Foundation Shaken." A hint, or a short remark, would sometimes lead them to a new train of thought and a fresh examination of the scriptures.

After they were excited to think freely, some gave up the doctrine of the miraculous conception, from reading the scriptures only, and observing certain things there with which it could not be reconciled. It was observed of one man, that, so long as he continued among the Methodists, he did not talk on religious subjects: but that after he became an Unitarian he talked freely about them: and he said that the reason was, his not being able to understand religion while a Methodist; but that since he became an Unitarian he found nothing in religion but what he could understand, and therefore he could talk about it.

The Methodists wanted some of these people to return to them; but they replied, "You drove us out of Egypt, or we might have remained in a state of bondage among you; but being set free we choose not to return again to the state of slavery from which we are happily delivered."

10.

Two or three years after my acquaintance with Mr. Vidler commenced, I visited Battle in Sussex, and several other places in that part of the country; in particular Northiam, and Rolvenden in Kent. The congregations in these places had been raised by Mr. V. and after his removal to London he visited them occasionally. Their preachers were all men in business, and their services were acceptable and useful. These congregations had become Universalists, and were zealous for the doctrine of the restoration, and had made some progress in their inquiries upon various other subjects; but were not at that

time Unitarians ; though some persons among them approached very near to Unitarianism, and others were favorably disposed towards it. They were generally liberal in their sentiments, friends to free inquiry, and diligent in the search after truth. They had a good deal of simplicity, piety, zeal and christian affection.

Some of them had pretty strong prejudices, and were rather narrow in their views of church communion. On the whole I was much pleased with what I found among them. During my stay I preached many times in Battle and the neighboring villages, and several times at Northiam and Rolvenden ; and had a great deal of conversation and theological discussion, with persons in different places, on a variety of subjects.

Before the Unitarian Fund was instituted, I made several journies to this part of the country ; and extended my labors as far east as Cranbrook and Rye, and as far west as Lewes, Ditchling and Brighton. In the course of

these journies, I had the pleasure of witnessing the progress of Unitarianism in the different congregations, and of assisting in promoting it, until they were established in the Unitarian faith.

The district of which I am speaking is a field in which, first and last, I have labored much, and with considerable success; but I shall not go into more particulars in this place, as I shall have to return to it again when giving an account of my labors since the Unitarian Fund was instituted.

11.

One more district remains to be spoken of, to which my exertions were extended, and where I had the happiness of planting Unitarianism, before the existence of the Unitarian Fund which enabled me to extend them to a much wider field, and under more favorable circumstances.

Hitherto I had not been north of the Humber, nor in any part of Yorkshire;

and it may not be uninteresting to relate how I was first introduced to that part of the country, the state in which I found things, and the manner in which I was received.

In the early part of the summer of 1805, while with my friend Mr. Vidler in London, he received a letter from a person at Thorne in Yorkshire; in which letter the writer said, that some persons in that town and its neighborhood, who were inclined to the doctrine of the universal restoration, were anxious to hear and converse with a preacher who maintained that doctrine; that they had heard of a preacher of that description who sometimes traveled in Lincolnshire; but knew not his address; that if he would visit them they would be glad to hear him, and would willingly entertain him. Mr. Vidler handed the letter to me as the person to whom the writer referred, and advised me to visit Thorne. A few weeks after, I conducted my eldest daughter to Hull, where

she had engaged to go as an assistant teacher in a boarding school: and from Hull went on to Thorne, which is forty miles from that town. As I approached Thorne on the Saturday in the afternoon, my feelings were much excited, and my mind considerably exercised. I was entering on a new scene of action, where I was a total stranger; I knew nothing of the people but what the letter before mentioned had communicated, and that did not give the names of any of them. For the writer of the letter only could I inquire, and he might be dead since the time of writing it; and what his character was, I knew not. I felt the importance of the mission in which I was now engaged, my heart was raised to God, I prepared myself for action in the best manner I could, and derived strength from on high.

With such feelings I entered Thorne, and walked through a considerable part of the town, pondering the course I should take. At length seeing a bar-

ber's shop I turned in to get shaved, but my chief object was to gain information respecting the character of the person for whom I had to inquire. I found he was in humble circumstances, but to my satisfaction learned he was a man of good character; of course I made the best of my way to his house. I had written at least, a week before hand, to inform him of my intended visit. On my arrival at his house I found he was not within; but his wife said, you are the gentleman we were expecting. I walked in and made myself quite free, which I have ever found to be the best way, especially with persons in humble circumstances. The good man soon came in, and I found they had engaged a lodging for me at the house of a widow woman, who was a Methodist; to which I soon after retired. In a short time a pretty large company came about me, and we arranged matters respecting the Sunday. It was determined that I should preach three times, in a barn,

which had been engaged for the purpose, and public notice was given accordingly. I found the people were Methodists, chiefly of the new connection. They had either given up the doctrine of endless punishment, or doubted the truth of it; but retained the other doctrines of reputed orthodoxy.

We soon got into conversation on religious subjects, and Dr. Priestley's name happening to be mentioned, I perceived it excited alarm, which led me to ask if any of them had known him or seen any of his writings. They replied they had neither known him nor seen any of his writings; but had learned that he was a very bad man, and maintained very dangerous doctrines. I said of his doctrines I will now say nothing, but I will give you some account of his character. This I accordingly did, in particular of the manner in which he had borne ill treatment and persecution, and the spirit which he had manifested towards his persecutors; and warned

them against giving implicit credit to what they heard about men and their doctrines of whom they had no personal knowledge. This I perceived had a good effect. After we had talked some time, my hostess said, "I hope, sir, you are not an Arian." I replied, "No, I am not, I never was an Arian." She rejoined, "Had you been an Arian, I dared not have let you sleep in my house." Had she known as much of me as she did some time after, she would have thought me still worse than an Arian; but at the time she had no idea of any thing more frightful than an Arian: nor did I find a lodging at her house after my first visit.

On the Sunday almost the whole town, and many people from the neighboring villages, came together to hear me; the barn was crowded, and many stood on the outside; all seemed deeply attentive. They had heard of me as an Universalist preacher, and knew nothing further of me. I expected that

so soon as they understood my views, as an Unitarian, their prejudices would be alarmed, and the multitude would be dispersed; but I thought there were a few individuals among them who would adhere to me, and that ultimately a congregation would be established: and thus it turned out. On the Sunday morning I preached on the love of God, in the afternoon, on the doctrine of reconciliation, and in the evening, on future punishment. After the evening service we had a large party together for conversation; and before we parted I told them, that I had said as much to them, both in public and in private, as I thought they were then capable of bearing, that, if I lived to see them again, I should have many more things to communicate to them: and I intreated them not to be afraid of thinking freely on all subjects, not to think any thing too sacred to be examined, not to deem any doctrine false, merely because it was generally thought to be false, nor

to conclude any doctrine to be true merely because it was generally received as truth; but to bring every thing to the test of reason and scripture, and to be determined to judge for themselves. We parted in the most friendly manner, and they urged me to visit them again as soon as I possibly could.

The strong excitement I had been under, and the great exertion I had made, was followed by a revulsion of feeling, and bodily indisposition, soon after I left Thorne, while traveling alone on a road where I knew nobody; but it pleased God to enable me, after a short delay, to pursue my journey, and to reach the end of it in safety,

In the following winter I revisited Thorne, and found that after my former visit a great alarm had been created respecting my sentiments as an Unitarian; the alarm had risen to such a height, that some persons had thought of writing to me not to go there any more; but this had been prevented by

others. A person had been from Thorne to the north marshes of Lincolnshire, and brought back with him my work called the "Antisatisfactionist," and a number of letters which I had written to persons in those marshes, on a variety of religious subjects. For these the people at Thorne were not yet prepared However, I found, that by reading of them, notwithstanding the alarm excited, several persons had become Unitarians. During my second visit I preached many times, in a granary, and had good congregations, though not such a multitude as I had at the first. I had much conversation with different persons, and brought them into a plan of meeting together to worship the one God, read the scriptures and such other books as might improve and edify them, and to do what they could for the establishment and promotion of the cause. Thus Unitarianism was now planted at Thorne, in the midst of a district where it was before unknown. The persons

who espoused it were few in number, in very humble circumstances, and all of them quite unlearned; but they were sufficiently numerous to keep the Unitarian standard erect, they were intelligent, pious, of good character, and had some zeal. By meeting together they bore a practical testimony to the doctrine and worship of the one God, edfied one another, and helped to enlighten their neighbors. They were soon assailed by the Methodists and Calvinists; but I put them into a way of standing their ground, and defending the Unitarian doctrine, and even of annoying their opponents. I advised them to take their stand on the plain facts and declarations of scripture, about which all christians are agreed; to bring those things about which christians differ to the test of those things in which they all agree, and to explain the former by the latter, to urge their opponents to reconcile with those things which they believe in common with Unitarians,

those doctrines which they assert in opposition to Unitarians.

The second time I visited Thorne, I extended my journey as far as York, and communicated to Mr. Wellbeloved the state of things at Thorne; and he had the goodness to send a parcel of books to the infant society of Unitarians there, which were read with avidity, and did considerable good.

I shall have occasion to return to the subject of the Unitarian cause at Thorne, and in the surrounding district, in another part of this work: what has been already said only relates to the commencement of it.

12.

In December, 1805, I visited and spent some days in Hull, and preached three times in the Presbyterian chapel. To my surprise, I was told by a respectable gentlemen, a leading member of the congregation, that I was the first person who had openly preached Uni-

tarianism in that chapel: what excited my surprise at hearing this, was my knowing that the ministers who had officiated there for many years had been Unitarians.

The preceding is an outline of my labors in the Unitarian cause, exclusive of what I wrote and published, before the Unitarian Fund was instituted. They extended through a period of about fourteen years, a considerable part of which was to me a time of great trial and difficulty.

CHAPTER III.

The Unitarian Fund Instituted:—Review of the Writer's Connection with that Institution.

BEFORE I give any further account of my missionary labors, it will be proper to notice the origin and progress of the Unitarian Fund, and to give an outline of my connection with that important Institution.

1.

Hitherto Mr. Vidler had been my chief friend and acquaintance in London. He had for some time been a confirmed Unitarian, and zealous in the cause. We had often conversed together on the existing state of things among Unitarians, and the prospect of success to the Unitarian cause, if proper plans could be adopted, and proper means used to promote it. We clearly saw that plans not yet projected were essentially necessary; but did not perceive distinctly what those plans should

be, only that, to answer the purpose, they must be popular ones, and that popular preaching must take the lead among the means used. We had both of us found by experience that plain preaching, in a lively animated style, would promote Unitarianism; but how a plan could be set on foot to extend such preaching to different parts of the kingdom, and to connect with it such other means as might be necessary, and how resources were to be found to support such plans on an extensive scale, we knew not. Still we cherished the hope that circumstances would arise, and measures be adopted, to enable us and others to do more than had yet been attempted. In a letter to Mr. V. before I had heard that any such plan as that of the Unitarian Fund had been thought of, I said, that if the Unitarians would set on foot a plan of itinerant preaching, I would readily devote half my time to that work. Much as I wished, I had no expectation that such

a plan would so soon be adopted, and when I first heard that the Fund was projected, it was to me like good news from a far country.

I, as well as Mr. V. had become acquainted with the old General Baptists, many of whom were Antitrinitarians; and we had both of us connected ourselves with them, as members of their annual assembly. These people had much candor, liberality and christian affection; upon many subjects their views were such as we entertained; but they had not sufficient zeal, nor were their numbers and resources sufficient, in particular, as little disposition appeared among them to make pecuniary exertions, to authorize the hope, that among them singly any energetic and comprehensive plans could be adopted and carried on with much success; besides, at that time, in most of their churches, baptism was still made a term of communion, which would be an obstacle to the success of

such plans. Yet there were individuals among them, from whom aid and co-operation might be expected, if such plans as seemed necessary could be once set on foot: and since they have been adopted, some of the most efficient agents in carrying them into effect have been of that denomination of christians.

With the Unitarians who were not Baptists, we as yet had very little acquaintance; but what we had learned of their habits and modes of thinking, of the style of preaching and plans in religion to which they have been accustomed, and of the little exertion they had made to promote their peculiar sentiments, was very far from encouraging the idea that they could be easily brought to support popular plans: from individuals among them much might be expected; but from the general body discouragement, rather than aid, might be anticipated, at least for some time.

The idea of instituting the Unitarian Fund originated with Mr. David Eaton.

He had thought of such an institution a considerable time, before any step could be taken towards its establishment. He projected the plan and suggested it to others, and was one of those who first labored to carry it into effect. Being then but slightly acquainted with Mr. Eaton I had not heard him mention the subject; nor do I remember receiving any information respecting such a plan being in contemplation, until an article appeared in the Universal Theological Magazine, calling upon the Unitarians to set some such plan on foot: which article, I understood was written by Mr. Eaton. The above article produced two others which appeared in subsequent numbers of the same work, and which were equally favorable to the proposed object.

At length a few individuals having digested the plan, they informed the public, through the medium of the Monthly Repository, in January 1806, a work then commenced, that a Society

was on the point of being formed, for encouraging Unitarianism by means of popular preaching. In February, they informed the public, through the same medium, that the society was proceeding prosperously, and that its object was to raise a Fund, stating briefly the purposes to which the Fund should be applied. In May, 1806, a meeting of the Society was held, and it was announced, that there were nearly sixty subscribers to the Fund. Thus the Unitarian Fund was established, and its members and friends rapidly increased. Its plans were immediately put in operation, and have been continually extended as much as its pecuniary means have allowed. The successive committees, and officers of the Society, have ever evinced the correctness of their judgement and their zeal in the cause, by their proceedings.

However small the number of those who espoused a plan so novel among Unitarians, they proceeded with judge-

ment, firmness, zeal and perseverance. To no individual was the Fund more indebted for its establishment and success than to Mr. Aspland, the first Secretary of it. He entered into the plan with all the energy of his mighty mind; he labored in the cause with the discriminating judgement, comprehensiveness of view, and persevering ardor, which are well known to distinguish him; he obviated the objections made to it which came from various quarters; and was unwearied in his exertions to give the Fund a firm establishment, and render its operations successful.

The founders of this institution have abundant reason to rejoice in the success of their labors. It has now been long firmly established. Its operations and effects have silenced the objections which were made to it when in its infancy, shown its importance and usefulness and acquired it the general approbation of the Unitarian public. It has done much towards spreading the pure doc-

trines and liberal spirit of the gospel. It has helped to bring Unitarians into closer union with each other, to excite more zeal among them, and to produce united exertions in the cause of truth, righteousness and charity. It may now be regarded as a parent institution, its successes having excited and encouraged Unitarians to form similar institutions in different districts; and other institutions in aid of the Unitarian cause may be said to have grown out of it. Within a few years Unitarianism has assumed a new aspect in the view of the public; and in giving it this new aspect the Unitarian Fund has had considerable influence.

It is not only by the labors of its missionaries, the assistance it has afforded to poor congregations, and the nurturing care which its committee has exercised over infant societies, that the Unitarian Fund has promoted the cause; but also by the influence which its reports have had on the Unitarian pub-

lic, and the zeal excited by its annual meetings, which have been attended by persons from various parts of England, even from some of the most distant counties. Its operations, till lately, were limited to Great Britain, the state of the Fund not allowing of their extention to foreign countries; but latterly foreign objects have been embraced; and it is probable, in future the most interesting part of the committee's report will relate to foreign countries. The manner in which so important an institution originated, and its gradual progress and extention, will, at a future period be no uninteresting part of history.

2.

As soon as the Society was formed I had the honor of being engaged as one of its missionaries, and of being chosen an honorary, and corresponding member of it. At first I was left to act upon plans of my own forming; in the North-east district already described,

and in the district in Yorkshire before mentioned. Of course it was wished that I should extend my exertions to any other parts of the country where I might find openings, so far as I should be able to attend to them. Afterwards more distant journeys were proposed to me by the committee, and I undertook them according to their directions. So long as I remained the pastor of the church in Wisbeach, when I went a long journey, which occupied me a considerable time, the committee furnished the congregation with a minister to supply for me during part of the time I was absent. When a journey did not keep me from home above two or three Sundays, some of the members of the congregation conducted the public services. Some short journeys were performed merely on week days. From the first, about half my time was devoted to the service of the Fund.

Though engaged as a missionary from the commencement of the Fund,

in 1806, I continued the minister of the congregation in Wisbeach, and received my income as such, till the close of the year 1810. During this time I traveled in the service of the Fund, on an average about two thousand miles in the year; and was repaid by the Treasurer the expences I incurred in traveling and acting as a missionary.

Towards the close of the year, 1810, the committee solicited me to resign my office and income in Wisbeach, and to become a perpetual missionary; requesting me to say what yearly salary would be necessary to enable me to do this. In answer I stated that a salary of one hundred pounds per annum would be necessary to enable me to act entirely upon the plans of the Fund; that I was willing to give up six months in the year to the disposal of the committee to be employed in distant journeys, that half of the other six months I would devote to missionary labors in the North-east district, and parts

adjacent, and spend about three months at home; but before the matter was finally settled, I requested, that the congregation in Wisbeach might be consulted, as from my long connection with them, and the ties which united us, I did not wish to relinquish my engagements with them without their acquiescence. In consequence the committee communicated the proposed plan to the Wisbeach congregation, and requested them to relinquish their claims upon me as their minister. To the proposed plan the congregation agreed; but wished me to continue to occupy the house in which I resided, which belonged to them, as a remuneration for my services when not traveling; in fact, they wished still to regard me as their pastor, however little I might be with them, though I had given up the income that they might be able to support another minister. The committee proposed allowing me one hundred guineas a year, instead of one

hundred pounds which I said would be necessary. This sum was to support me and my wife (my family was grown up) and to defray all my traveling expences. Such was the plan on which I became a perpetual missionary.

While the above plan was in contemplation being on a journey, I called on an old friend, a reputed orthodox minister, and in the course of conversation, I mentioned that I was about to resign my income in Wisbeach, and to act entirely upon the plans of the Unitarian Fund. My old friend advised me not to do this; he said "After a few years you will be old, and not able to travel as a missionary, and what will you do then? If you keep your situation in Wisbeach, the people there are too much attached to you to wish you to resign when you become old and infirm; you will be sure of a provision in old age." My reply was, "about what you mention I have no concern; my concern is to do what I think most right, what appears

to me to be my duty; the rest is God's concern: and if I do what appears to me to be most right, what I think my duty, he will take care of, and provide for me in old age." On this principle I have ever acted, and never have seen cause to regret that I have done so, nor do I fear that I shall ever have reason to regret it. God can never fail those who put their trust in him.

Upon the income of one hundred guineas a year I went on as a missionary for eight years, usually traveling about three thousand miles in the year. Had I asked for more, from the liberal manner in which I was treated by the successive committees, I have no doubt I should have received it; but I knew the state of the Fund, the continually increasing demands of the Unitarian cause upon it, and it was my wish from the first to proceed on the most economical plan possible; besides from my habit of walking, and mode of living on the road I could travel at much less

expence than many other persons could have done. At that time I could walk forty miles in a day, and needed very little refreshment while I was doing it. For five years after I became a perpetual missionary, I received twelve pounds a year from the Yorkshire Fund; at the end of that time I declined receiving it, as I thought, having a successor fixed in my office in the congregation in Wisbeach, that he ought to have it; and I wrote to that purpose to the gentleman through whom I received it. I also gave up to the minister who succeeded me the house in which I resided, (these were voluntary acts,) and placed my wife with my daughters at Boston, in Lincolnshire. One thing which enabled me to go on so long on the income mentioned above, was the profits of my publications, which were greater at that time than they have been since.

3.

At length, my family having removed

to America in the year 1818, I had the rent and taxes of a house to pay, and to support all the expences of housekeeping, as well as my traveling expences; besides which I began to feel that I could not walk as I had formerly done, nor travel, when walking, without being at more expence than formerly; and both my wife and myself advancing in years, we could not well bear the privations we had once borne. On these accounts I found it would not be possible for me to go on, as I had hitherto done, on an income of one hundred guineas a year. I wrote a paper containing a statement of these things, and sent it to the Fund committee, not asking for any thing, but leaving entirely to them to act as they should think proper.

The committee in the most prompt and liberal manner unanimously resolved that I should be requested to accept an addition of fifty guineas a year to my salary as missionary. Thus my income

became one hundred and fifty guineas per annum, including my traveling expences, and such it continued during the last four years of my acting as a perpetual missionary.

At the same time as the secretary communicated to me the above resolution, he also informed me, that, if I could make it every way agreeable to my feelings, I should remove to the vicinity of London, in order to try, during the winter months, to organize a plan of local preaching, find persons who might act as local preachers, and places where they might be employed: at the same time he assured me, that my complying with the wishes of the committee in this respect was not a condition of my receiving the increase of salary which they had requested me to accept; that my complying or not complying was left entirely to my own choice and determination. He further informed me, that if I concluded to remove to the vicinity of London, as my place of residence,

the committee had resolved that I should receive twenty-five pounds towards the expence of the removal.

With the wishes of the committee, so delicately expressed, after due deliberation, I complied: and, in October, 1819, fixed my residence in the vicinity of the metropolis, where it continued to be until the latter end of September 1822; when we removed to Trowbridge, in Wiltshire, the place where I reside.

4.

After having thought much on a mission to the United States of America, early in the year 1816, I submitted to the committee a paper on the subject. At first, those of the committee with whom I conversed on the matter, seemed favorable to my undertaking such a mission; but, after due deliberation, they were of opinion, that the rules of the Society, by which they were bound to regulate their proceedings, did not authorize the appropriation of any part of the

Fund to foreign objects, and that, consequently, they could not employ me on a mission to America. Though my thoughts had been much exercised on a mission to that country, and I had set my mind a good deal upon it, the decision of the committee, though contrary to what I had expected it to be, did not trouble me. Believing all things to be directed by the Almighty, through the operation of second causes, I regarded the above dicision as the voice of providence to me in this matter; and concluded, that by the operation of what was not under my control, God had negatived my undertaking such a mission, at least at that time.

Still I continued to be urged by letters, which I received occasionally from America, in particular from a gentleman whom I never saw, and who has labored much in the Unitarian cause in that country, to go thither as a missionary; but, not seeing my way clear in the business, I took no step in it.

At length in the latter end of the year 1820, it was mentioned to me by the secretary, that the committee had some thoughts of proposing a mission to America, and he inquired if I should like to engage in such a mission. I without hesitation expressed my readiness to undertake it. After it had been mentioned several times, I was requested to give the committee in writing, my views of a mission to the United States, and also of one to Ireland. With this request I complied. A mission to Ireland had been projected some years before; I had engaged to undertake it, and it was after all given up as not likely to answer the end designed. I had since received no information, that would authorize the conclusion that a mission to Ireland would be more eligible, or more likely to prove successful then, than at the time when it had been thought best to relinquish it.

I gave my reasons at large for wishing to decline undertaking a mission to that

country, till more information should be obtained respecting the probability of its success, and the way seemed better prepared for it. I stated much at length the grounds on which I thought a mission to the United States of America was highly desirable, and likely to prove completely successful; the reasons why I thought myself qualified for such a mission, and capable of executing it to advantage; and also stated the time it would require, and the terms on which I would undertake it. This paper went before the committee, and the members of it seemed anxious for my undertaking the mission to America; so far as depended on them it appeared to be resolved on. By some means information respecting this matter reached the Unitarians in the United States, and they prematurely gave notice of it in one of their periodical works, fixing the time when I was expected in that country; and some friends of the cause in the Western States began to project plans

to promote the success of my expected mission. A resolution had been passed at the annual meeting of the Fund Society in 1820, which altered the rules so far as to authorize the extending the operations of the Fund to foreign objects. Still the committee thought it would be proper to call a general meeting of the subscibers, to take their opinion of the projected mission, before it was finally determined on.

Accordingly, early in the spring of 1821, a general meeting was called, at which my paper was read, and opportunity given for any person present to ask me any questions he might think proper respecting its contents, and the measure on which they were met to decide; after which I was permitted to withdraw while the subject was taken into consideration by the meeting. It appears, that the projected mission occasioned a pretty long and warm debate, and the meeting was much divided in opinion as to the propriety of adopting

such a measure: the consequence was, that it was resolved to postpone the final decision until the annual meeting at the following Whitsuntide. I was called in, and informed by the chairman of the result of the deliberation; by whom, and the whole meeting I was treated with much liberality and respect.

In the interval between the above meeting and the annual one, I had opportunity of learning what were the views and feelings of our friends in various parts of the country, as well as in Town, respecting the proposed mission, and had leisure to deliberate on the course which I ought to take, as I clearly perceived, that, if the annual meeting decided in favor of my undertaking the mission, it was not likely to be unanimously. After the most deliberate view of all circumstances, it appeared to me, that I ought not to engage in an undertaking of such extent and magnitude on the decison of a small majority in its favor, especially, if in the minority there

were persons of weight and influence; that to do so would be to engage in a work of considerable difficulty, the success of which must necessarily be uncertain, under great disadvantage: besides, if my engaging in it would occasion dissention among those who ought to be most firmly united, and produce effects injurious to the cause at home, then I ought not to do it; as this would be inconsistent with the end I had in view in proposing to undertake it. I felt fully persuaded that it was essentially necessary that all connected with the Fund should continue firmly united, and act together with as much harmony as possible; and I resolved not to engage in any measure which should interrupt this unity, or disturb this harmony. From these considerations I resolved, that, unless at the annual meeting the subscribers appeared to be nearly unanimous in wishing me to undertake a mission to America, much as my mind had been set upon it

I would decline it. In pursuance of this resolution, I gave the secretary another paper to lay before the committee, in which I fully explained my views, and stated, that if the resolution in favor of the American mission, was, at the annual meeting carried merely by a majority, I should beg leave most respectfully, to decline undertaking it.

At the annual meeting, on the resolution in favor of my going to America being moved, a pretty warm debate ensued, and had it been put to the vote, though it might have been carried in the affirmative, there would have been a large and respectable minority; but it did not go to the vote. When the matter had been debated for a considerable time, a gentleman rose and said, that he was authorized by me to state, that if the resolution was carried merely by a majority, I should beg leave respectfully to decline undertaking the mission; on which the gentleman who had moved the resolution begged leave to withdraw it; and the matter ended.

Though some persons who were anxious to carry the measure might not be pleased with the course I took, I still think I acted right, and did what was best for the cause. I had to sacrifice my own feelings in this, as I have had to do in other cases; but I followed the best dictates of my judgement; and it is a maxim which I have always endeavored to keep in view, that in no case should the feelings be suffered to lead us contrary to the dictates of the understanding. I still think a mission to America would have greatly promoted the Unitarian cause; and it is highly probable the sea voyage would have heen of essential service to my health and constitution; but providence overruled things otherwise, and we ought in all things to say, The will of the Lord be done.

5.

To the Unitarian Fund I feel under great obligations. Before it existed, it was not in my power to avoid receiving

from the people whom I visited, in different parts of the country, something towards my traveling expences, and they had sometimes to make small collections for the purpose. This was very unpleasant to me, especially as they were generally working people; but it was not in my power to decline their aid, not being in circumstances to defray from my own resources the expences incurred by traveling as a missionary. The establishment of the Fund relieved me from this difficulty. It was with pleasure I informed my friends, in the different places I visited, that they should make no more such collections, that in future I should need nothing from them towards my expences, and recommended that such of them as were able and willing would subscribe to the general Fund.

Without the aid of the Fund it would not have been in my power to have extended my labors, as I have done, to the most remote parts of England and also

to Scotland and Wales; nor could I without its support have devoted myself entirely to the work of a missionary, and have labored incessantly in it. Besides I could not, independently of the Fund, have furnished the pecuniary aid to infant societies, which was necessary to enable them to go on. Acting alone I could never have effected, what I have done in connection with such able co-adjutors and fellow laborers, as this institution brought together; nor is it likely that, aside from my connection with it, I should have been so generally known, or have had friends in most parts of the kingdom, or that my labors would have been called for in so many different places and directions. To this connection, I conceive, I am, in some measure indebted for the manner in which I have been received every where among Unitarians, and for the degree of reputation which I have gained. Supported by the Fund, assisted by the advice of its committees, and that of other respectable

persons connected with it, and protected by their countenance and approbation, I have enjoyed advantages highly favorable to the success of my exertions; and I hope these advantages have not been bestowed upon me altogether in vain.

To the treasurer and secretaries of the Fund I have been much indebted; for the readiness with which they have attended to any suggestions, which I have found it necessary to make, relative to the plans I had to execute, and given me information; and for their having brought before the successive committees what, from time to time, I have proposed respecting missionary journeys and the work in which I have been engaged, and aided me by their counsels. To the committees I owe the most grateful acknowledgments; for their candid attention to those things which from time to time I have submitted to their consideration, for their advice and countenance, and the confidence which from our first connection they reposed in me. To the

subscribers and friends to the institution I am under obligations, for the manner in which, at our annual meetings, they have shown their approbation of my services, and encouraged me in the work in which I have been engaged. I wish, in the most distinct and public manner, to express my gratitude for all these things.

6.

After having been engaged as a missionary of the Fund for more than sixteen years, twelve of them as a perpetual missionary; after having felt so much satisfaction and pleasure in my connection with those with whom I acted, and having had so much interesting intercourse with them; after having felt so much delight and had so much success in the work, whatever laborious exertions and privations it required; after having formed interesting connections in various parts of the kingdom, and cultivated friendship with many excellent

persons in numerous places distant from each other; after having planted churches in different districts, watered others, and made disciples to the great Master in many places where churches are not yet formed; it was no easy task to bring myself to the determination to relinquish the office of a perpetual missionary, and by engaging as the settled minister of a congregation, to confine myself, and my future labors, to one district. This, after the most mature consideration, appeared to me to be the most fit and proper course for me to take; but, after the friendly manner in which I have been received by the Unitarian public as well as for the satisfaction of those among whom I have labored in distant parts of the country, I think it right to state my reasons for withdrawing from an office to which I had devoted myself.

My views of the importance of the office remained unaltered, the pleasure I had in the work undiminished, and, I trust I may say, my zeal in the cause

unabated; my attachment to my friends whom, while traveling as a missionary, I had opportunity of visiting, kept increasing; my anxiety for the peace and edification of the congregations which I had assisted in planting, or in building up, was as great as it had ever been; and the prospect of success to my labors was never brighter: still I was convinced of the propriety, and indeed, necessity of giving up the office of a perpetual missionary; because I felt that I could not go on in it with all that activity of body and mind, and that incessant exertion, which according to my views of it, it required; nor bear the fatigue, inconvenience of weather in traveling, and sometimes of accomodation, which a missionary must contentedly bear. Nearly sixty years of age, I perceived that I was not, under some views, the same man I had formerly been; I felt the weakness and infirmity of age coming upon me; these, perhaps, had been accelerated by the labor and

fatigue I had gone through, the having been exposed to all kinds of weather, and required to accomodate myself to very different modes of living, for the last twenty years. I had found that, for several years, I gradually became less capable of traveling on foot, and of enduring fatigue than formely. My health had latterly been often seriously interrupted, and I was frequently subject to complaints, which rendered traveling extremely inconvenient, not to say dangerous. Though I had never failed in any of my engagements, when on a missionary journey, I had sometimes traveled and conducted public services, when, had I not thought the duties of my office required it, I should have confined myself to a room, and sought medical relief. Sometimes, to be able to keep on, I found it necessary to take what was not calculated to remove the disorder, but merely to keep my frame in a state which would enable me to proceed; when, had I been at

home, I should have taken something different; being always resolved, when I had commenced a missionary journey; to complete it, if possible, according to the plan which had been previously arranged. At length I was convinced that I could not go on much longer as a missionary, that if I wished to preserve my life and have my health re-established, I must retire to a situation where I should enjoy more repose, and should have less labor. I knew that the state of the Fund was not such as would authorize its being burdened by any of its agents who were not capable of active service; had it been otherwise my mind would have revolted at the thought of so burdening it; equally revolting to me was the idea of attempting to go on as a missionary any longer than I could fully execute the office, according to the views I had of the duties of it. For these reasons I resolved on again fixing with a congregation, hoping that, if it pleased God to

spare me, I should be able to fulfil the duties of a pastor for some years to come; and I wished for a situation which would afford opportunities for occasional exertions in the surrounding district; as I desired to work as much as remaining strength would permit. Such a situation offering, I have accepted it, and hope still to do good, though in a much narrower circle, than I have of late years moved, and on a greatly diminished scale.

Such are my reasons for relinquishing my office as a perpetual missionary. This, however, will not dissolve my connection with the Unitarian Fund Society; the objects of that society I shall ever be anxious to promote, though no longer regularly engaged in its service; so far as I can, consistently with my duties, as the pastor of a congregation, I will still devote the ability which it shall please God to give me, to the leading purpose for which that Institution exists.

Appendix to Chapter III.

THE following extract from the Report of the committee of the Unitarian Fund, read to the general meeting of the subscribers, May 21. 1823, and the resolutions passed at that general meeting, though honorable testimonials to my conduct and labors, as a missionary, I do not think I ought to withhold from my readers, especially as they havebeen published under the direction of the committee.

"The most important missionary journey to be noticed is that of Mr. Wright in the summer and autumn of last year, into Lancashire, which was the principal scene of his labors, but in the course of which he also visited parts of Staffordshire, Shropshire, Cheshire, and North Wales. It was an unsual circumstance for Mr. Wright to be employed in the same district for two successive years, but the good effects which had been produced by his visit to Lancashire in the year 1821; the activity which he had caused, increased, or judiciously directed,

amongst our friends in different parts of that county; the missionary plans which many of them had engaged in, or were contemplating; and the generally progressive appearance of our cause, were thought to indicate that the same degree of exertion would yield ampler returns of usefulness there, than in any other part of the kingdom. It is unnecessary to say more, as to the fulfilment of this hope, than that both Mr. Wright and the committee consider what has been accomplished is not unworthy of his last efforts in your service, in the character of permanent missionary.

"Mr. Wright's retirement from that office, and the motives which compelled the committee to accept his resignation, were stated in No. II. of the Unitarian Fund Register. It is impossible to part with so old and faithful, so zealous, able and useful a laborer in the service of your institution, (however necesary for his own health and comfort the separation may have become,) without very painful feelings. His name has long been, and will long continue to be, associated with that of the Unitarian Fund. The date of his connection with us differs little from that of our existence as a society. For twelve years he has been wholly in your employ, acting in harmony with each successive committee, and receiving your well-merited thanks at each successive anniversary. Throughout England, Wales, and Scotland; in town and country; in the most intelligent and in the wildest districts; in the cha-

pel, the dwelling house, the barn, and the open air; by writing, preaching, conference and conversation; from the pulpit and the press, he has advocated your righteous cause, and heaven has blessed his labors. His sermons and tracts, simple, manly, scriptural, and convincing, quelled the fears of those who apprehended that your employment of agents, who had not possessed the advantages of a learned education, would disgrace the Unitarian name; and the large success of his exertions silenced *their* objection who thought that the time was not yet come when genuine christianity could be preached, with acceptance to the poor. This society may justly congratulate itself on having been the means of placing him in that particular sphere for which Providence seems to have formed him, and thus enabling him to achieve much, which else he could not even have attempted; and now that increasing years and infirmities have withdrawn him to a more limited but highly important station, the affectionate remembrance and strong regard of its members will follow him to his retreat, and their earnest prayers for the peace and happiness of his declining years will ascend to that gracious Being whose sole Deity and paternal character he has vindicated to so many thousands of his countrymen."

The following are the resolutions passed at the same meeting.

"That the members of this society cannot

relinquish the services of Mr. Wright as their perpetual missionary, without expressing their most cordial satisfaction at the manner in which he has, for twelve years, discharged his laborious duties; their high esteem for the piety, zeal, ability and perseverance, which he has uniformly displayed; their congratulations on the success which has attended his exertions to evangelize the poor, in almost every part of Great Britain; and their warmest wishes for his eminent usefulness as the minister of a congregation, and for the prosperity and happiness of his declining years, until he shall be summoned to enjoy the recompence of the "good and faithful servant."

"That the committee be directed to purchase from Mr. Wright twenty-five pounds worth of his theological publications, and to deposit one complete set of them, handsomely bound, with an appropriate inscription, in the Dissenting Library, Red Cross Street, as a public and permanent memorial of his connection with the Unitarian Fund, and of the regard and gratitude of its supporters for his services."

The following is my address, as reported in the Monthly Repository, for May, 1823.

"I rise, Sir, to thank you and this Society, for the very kind and too flattering notice you have

taken of me. It is not possible for me to find words that will do justice to my own feelings on the present occasion. My connection with the Unitarian Fund I have regarded, do still regard, and shall ever regard, as one of the happiest circumstances of my life: it has given me opportunity of extending my exertions, in a cause which will ever be dear to me as life itself, to the most distant parts of this island, and of laboring incessantly for the promotion of that glorious cause. I wish to express distinctly the obligations I am under to this society and its committees. They gave me, Sir, the whole island for my bishopric; it is true, to this bishopric were not appended a palace and large worldly emoluments; and what has a missionary of the pure gospel to do with palaces and worldly emoluments? But they gave me in connection with this bishopric what is far more valuable; they gave me their judicious counsel, their powerful countenance, and able and effective support, in the important work in which I was engaged: and what can an Unitarian missionary need more? With the weapons furnished by reason and scripture he may go on to demolish the strong holds of error, and spread successfully the Unitarian doctrine among the mass of the people. I cannot forget, Sir, what were my feelings, and what I believe were the feelings of others with whom I had the honor of acting when this Institution wa first established. If, then, it was regarded as an

experiment, it has long ceased to be so regarded; it has long been well established, and may now be regarded as a parent institution, others having sprung from it, in certain districts; and I ardently wish that its childrem may rise up in every district of the kingdom, to aid and be aided by, and act in concert with their venerable parent, the London Unitarian Fund. I bless heaven, Sir, that I have had strength to go on in its service until it is so well established, and has produced such important effects." Mr. W. then referred to the new aspect which Unitarianism has assumed during the last few years, to the new churches which have been formed, many of them consisting of the poor and unlearned, and stated as facts, which had been proved by the operations of the Fund, and of which he had witnessed the proof, that Unitarianism is capable of being, and now is in many places, the religion of the poor and unlearned, and his full conviction, that of all religious systems it is eminently calculated to be the religion of those despised and numerous classes, as being perfectly level with their capacity, containing a provision for their moral and spiritual wants, and requiring nothing but what they are capable of doing; that Unitarians can no longer be charged with dwelling in the frigid zone of christianity, with being without zeal; and that he had seen its efficacy in destroying bigotry and producing christian charity. He expressed his deep regret in having been com-

pelled by increasing years and infirmities to withdraw from an office in which he experienced the purest pleasure; but that though he retired from the field, before the conflict with error, superstition and bigotry was concluded, it was not till the victory was ensured; and with the determination that if the enemy assailed his quarters, they should find him still in his armor and ready to renew the contest with all the strength he had remaining. This led him to mention the controversy in which he is now engaged, having been attacked by a Calvinist minister at Trowbridge. In which controversy he stated, that one important point is ascertained, i. e. that though the Unitarian doctrine can be expressed in the words of scripture without addition or comment, the Trinitarian doctrine is acknowledged by his opponent to be incapable of being so expressed. Mr. W. distinctly expressed the obligations he felt to the successive committees and officers of the Unitarian Fund, and concluded with saying, "You may have missionaries of superior learning, of greater talents, but I have been resolved that you shall have none who will be more devoted to the cause, who will serve you more faithfully, or with greater zeal."

CHAPTER IV.

A Review of the Missonary's general mode of proceeding, and rules which he found it necessary to observe.

BEFORE I give a sketch of my labors, in connection with the Unitarian Fund, in different parts of the country, it may be proper to state the general course which I found it necessary to pursue when acting as a missionary, and certain rules of conduct which I found it important to observe: nor can it be wrong to include some hints respecting the qualifications necessary in order to a missionary's laboring with success. What I have learned by observation and experience may be of some use to others.

1.

Before I engaged as a missionary of the Fund, and in particular as a perpetual one, I had full opportunity of form-

ing an estimate of the nature of the office and work, the qualifications and labor it would require, the inconveniences and privations to which it would subject me, and the frequent disappointments, failures, and discouragements I had to expect. It was not without counting the cost, well weighing all the circumstances, and duly deliberating on the whole matter, that I gave myself up to the work of a missionary. I would advise no one to engage in it without much previous thought, nor without well counting the cost, and having his mind fully made up patiently to bear any kind of inconvenience, privation, difficulty and discouragement to which it may subject him, and to an unwearied course of labor and exertion. Nor ought any one to become a missionary, unless after close examination and deliberation he be convinced that he possesses the qualifications which the work requires. In many cases I could not have proceeded had I not had full con-

fidence in my own powers, and believed myself capable of doing what I attempted. Nor is there any thing in this inconsistent with christian humility, and entire dependence on God; for to him we are indebted for all our powers, and for their continued use: and after all, our success must depend on his blessing attending our labors; but he who underrates his own talents will never effect much. I certainly engaged in the office and went on in the work, with a full persuasion that I was fully qualified for it, and that God in his providence had called me to engage in it.

2.

Though I had never enjoyed the advantages of a regular education, I had educated myself, and had acquired some knowledge both of letters and of science, as well as a good deal of general knowledge, before my connection with the Unitarian Fund commenced. I had so far acquainted myself with the dead

languages as to be able to examine any text in the Hebrew Bible, in the Septuagint, or in the Greek Testament; and was capable of forming some judgement of the criticisms on the sacred scriptures which I met with. From my childhood I had been conversant with the scriptures, and could easily refer to any part of them. I had attended pretty closely, and, as I thought, made myself master of most subjects in theology. I was pretty well acquainted with most points of controversy, and had years before been compelled by circumstances to become a controversialist. I felt myself well prepared to preach as a scripturist, having been long in the habit of referring to the sacred writings in proof of whatever I taught publicly, and the language of scripture being quite familiar to me. A missionary ought to have his mind well stored with knowledge, in particular of the scriptures and theological subjects in general. If his stock of knowledge be small, his

poverty in this respect will soon be discovered in the different situations in which he will be placed. He must be armed at every point, and have the resistless weapons of truth, furnished by reason and scripture, ever ready for use, as he must expect to be assailed from every quarter, both by reputed orthodox believers, and by professed unbelievers: nor ought he to be ignorant of their mode of attack, and the weapons with which they will assail him. He will have to meet inquiries of every kind and upon a great diversity of subjects, as well as on various parts of scripture, and it will be expected that he should be prepared to answer them. It will not do for an Unitarian missionary to declaim and dogmatize; he must address the understandings of men, by a clear statement of truth, and present to their minds, those arguments and proofs which will produce conviction. He will be expected to preach doctrinally, and on controversial subjects,

and to be prepared to obviate all the objections which may be urged against his views of divine truth. Constantly traveling, he can have but few books to refer to on any occasion; therefore it is necessary he should have what he might draw from books stored up in his mind, to use as occasion may require. With whatever stock of knowledge he may begin, he must seek to increase it daily. He must seize every opportunity which offers for reading and study; and endeavor to gain all the information and improvement he can from those with whom he converses in different places. I have read many volumes, and more small tracts, when on missionary journies, and derived much information, from ministers and others in different places. The missionary should be an economist of time; by rising early, taking care of the small fragments of time; which put together, will soon amount to days and weeks, as farthings accumulated do to

shillings and pounds. He should acquire the habit of reading while walking; I have done this, and wrote notes on subjects, as well as studied discourses, while going from one place to another.

3

The missionary's leading business is preaching; and for this he must be constantly prepared. He must hold himself ready to preach every day, and at any hour, if an opportunity of doing it offers. Once in Cornwall I preached fifteen times in eight days, and more than half those times the preaching was in the open air. He must never omit preaching when an opportunity offers, unless prevented by sickness. He must labor in season and out of season, so far as his strength will permit. He must always have suitable discourses ready in his mind, as he may be called to preach with little previous notice, and not have any time allowed him to prepare for the particular occasion.

He must be prepared to preach at any time, on any of the principal subjects in theology. It may not be possible for him to determine what subjects will be the most proper before he gets to the place where he is to preach, nor before he sees of what description his hearers are. I have had to change the intended subject of my discourse after I got in the pulpit, in consequence of seeing a different audience from what I had expected. It always should be a fixed point with him to deliver a discourse, not one which he may have most ready, and which would cost him least labor, but such as is best suited to the hearers and the occasion, whatever labor it may cost him. He should use all possible means to acquaint himself with the character, views and circumstances of the people who are likely to hear him. He must acquire the habit of praying and preaching extempore; as it is scarcely possible he should have written prayers and sermons suited to

all the various audiences to whom he will have to preach, or the variety of occasions; besides, his style of preaching must be varied according to the description of his hearers; not to say, that in many places, his delivering written prayers and sermons would be prejudicial to his usefulness; nor would they excite the attention among the poor and unlearned, nor make that impression upon them which extemporary prayers and sermons make. Though extemporary, his prayers ought not to be without plan, nor his sermons unstudied. I have found it best to have a plan of prayer in my mind, and to fill it up variously at different times, and in a considerable measure with the devotional language of scripture. A missionary's prayers should be short, as with him the discourse is more the principal object than with a regular minister. I have always studied my discourses, and generally written notes of them, though I have seldom used the notes in public.

4.

A good deal of thought and care are necessary in the selection of subjects, and the adaptation of them to the hearers. In most new places to which a missionary goes, the people have been told, that Unitarians make nothing of Jesus Christ and the gospel, that they reject a great part of the scriptures, and preach only a system of dry morality: the prejudice thus created must in some degree be removed, and the attention of the hearers gained, or no good will be done. Hence in the outset, I have usually preached on such subjects as were calculated to show that the above representation is false, that we make much of Jesus Christ and the gospel, and build our faith upon the scriptures: that christianity, according to our views of it, is a vital and practical religion; that it comes home to the hearts of men, contains a provision for all their moral and spiritual wants, and is calculated to interest all their affections. I have

endeavored to give them right views of Christ and the gospel, before I made a direct attack upon the wrong ones which they had previously entertained; and to give the word of truth a direction to their understandings and their hearts. I have found it best not to rouse all the prejudices at once; but to expose some of the most leading errors first, always taking care to dwell more upon the opposite truth than on the error refuted; and if I brought the hearers to receive that truth, they would give up the error opposed to it. We should never attempt to take from men what they think true and valuable, without shewing them that we present them with something more true and more valuable in its stead. In preaching on controverted subjects I have always studied as much as possible, to avoid all offensive language, and to speak respectfully of those whose errors I felt it a duty to explode. Having generally to preach doctrinally, I ever made a point of showing the prac-

tical use and value of the doctrine. In a controversial discourse I never thought it right to go into many particulars, or to enter on what was mere criticism; but studied to avoid dry detail, and to keep within the reach of common sense, to keep the hearers interested, and to affect their hearts as well as enlighten their understandings. A missionary should never forget that he has to do chiefly with the common people, and that his object is to lead them to right views of the gospel, to the cultivation of the spirit of Christ, and the imitation of his example. In judging what subjects will be most suitable, it is necessary to consider, not only the character and views of the hearers, and the circumstances in which they are placed; but also how often the missionary may have opportunity of addressing them, and what other means can be used for their information when he is gone. If he can preach only a discourse or two, it will be necessary for him to give a general

view of Unitarianism, and to attempt more than it might be prudent to attempt in a single discourse could he stay longer. He should cultivate the talent of generalizing subjects; and when he can make but a single effort he ought to exert all his strength in that effort, and make as deep an impression as possible. Where he can preach several times, or soon repeat his visit, he should make one discourse prepare the way for another, endeavor to secure the continued attention of his hearers, and lead them on gradually; but in all these cases the exercise of wisdom and prudence are necessary. When I had to preach in several places within a few miles of each other, I usually had some of the same hearers at more than one of those places: consequently it was a fixed plan with me not to deliver the same discourses in two such neighboring places, unless particularly requested; and then I took care it should be known that I did it by request; for it would have been

mortifying to me to think persons had come some miles to hear a sermon which they had heard before: and, had it been known that I was in the practice of doing so, it might have hindered some persons from following me from place to place, and have led them to think that I had only a certain number of sermons to preach.

I was in the habit of making some new sermons weekly when on a journey, though I might not absolutely need them. This I thought necessary in order to preserve a facility of doing it; and it was my plan to think over the matter of an old sermon before I preached it again, and to try to make some improvement in it each time I preached it; for this purpose I generally spent a short time alone before I went to the place of meeting.

5.

A missionary's style of preaching should be plain and solemn, and in some places familiar and colloquial; always

suited to the mass of his hearers; and it should be varied as the congregations whom he addresses vary. In the former part of my life, my style, both in writing and preaching, was much more figurative than it afterwards became. It was gradually that I acquired a compressed, plain, rather argumentative style, which I think not altogether without clearness and strength. This style I had acquired before I became a missionary, though I hope I have improved it since; as I grow older I fear it loses something as to animation. My public services during my missionary life, I always conducted with as much plainness as possible, and I never could relish any thing but what was solemn in the pulpit. What is called fine composition I never attempted; I was always sensible that I was not capable of it, and I was far from thinking it either necessary or suited to the preaching of the gospel, in particular to the preaching of it to the poor and unlearned. Still,

I think I never used any low or disgusting language in preaching. In addressing congregations of illiterate people, I have frequently adopted a familiar and colloquial style, and have found it to have a good effect. In preaching to such people I have not found any other style to excite so much attention, or make so deep an impression. Sometimes I introduced short anecdotes in my discourses to illustrate or enforce what I was saying; and it has been useful; but this should be done sparingly, the anecdotes should be well chosen, and quite to the purpose. I have found a direct address to the hearers has always excited attention, and seldom failed of making an impression. I have seen an audience apparently inattentive while I have been speaking; but so soon as my speech was directed immediately to them every eye was turned upon me, every ear open, and the closest possible attention paid.

My constant rule was to adapt my

discourse to the mass of my hearers, and to adopt such a style as I thought best suited to them. The doing this sometimes required the practice of self-denial. When a few educated and genteel people were present, to deliver a discourse in a style best suited to the completely illiterate, might lead those educated and genteel people to form a low opinion of the attainments, or, at least, of the taste of the preacher. I once felt this. It was the first time I went to preach to a congregation of poor illiterate people, at Kingsley, an obscure village on the borders of Delamere Forest. I was accompanied thither by a party of gentlemen from Chester; in consequence of which I prepared a discourse in a style which might be suited to the ears of those gentlemen; but before I got to the place I had a conflict with myself, whether I should preach the discourse which I had prepared, or one in a style suited to the poor unlearned congregation; it struck

me that if I did the former my visit would not answer the end designed as to the mass of my hearers, and that if I did the latter I might let myself down in the view of my companions; the latter I felt to be my duty, and I did it: I afterwards related the matter to those gentlemen, who expressed their entire approbation of my conduct. In preaching the same discourse in different congregations I have thought it necessary to alter the style of it, and change some of the language. I have thought a good effect has sometimes been produced by my delivering an appropriate introduction before I took my text, with a view to disarm prejudice and excite and fix the attention of the audience; such an introduction has contained a declaration of our faith in God and Christ, that we built all the doctrines we taught upon the holy scriptures, and that all we required of those who differed from us was a candid and patient hearing, and that what we said might be examined.

6.

Frequently, in the course of my missionary journies, I had to preach in the open air; this was the case in some parts of Scotland and Wales, and in most places in Cornwall, and, in a few iustances, in other parts of England. Though I do not think there is any law against preaching in the open air, I avoided doing it as much as I could consistently with what I thought my duty; and always before I did it endeavored to ascertain that no tumult or disorder was likely to be produced by it. When I could obtain no building of any kind to preach in, and had good reason to think a meeting might be held in the open air, in a peaceable and orderly manner, I preached abroad, and had very large congregations, from five hundred to two thousand people. Preaching in the open air I found to be much more fatiguing than preaching in the largest building; besides the danger of interruption and injury from foul weather. I found it best to stand before

a high building, with the wind behind it, to stand perfectly erect, to speak very deliberately, use short sentences, make many pauses, and to make the whole service rather shorter than usual. By taking this method I could make myself heard by a very large assembly.

Seldom could I obtain the use of pulpits belonging to christians of other denominations; and when they could be obtained, I did not think it right to use them until the party to whom they belonged were informed what doctrine I intended preaching; lest they should say they had been deceived, and that I had acted illiberally in preaching against their religious views in their own pulpits; and I never chose to enter any pulpit without being perfectly at liberty to preach whatever I believed to be true.

I never chose to preach in any unlicensed house, if the owner was likely to be brought to trouble for allowing me to do it; at least not till he was fully informed of the risk to which he exposed

himself; in such a case I preferred being in the open air, as then I took the risk, if any, entirely upon myself. At Mirfield, a village in Yorkshire, finding on my arrival about the middle of the day, that the house in which I had to preach that evening was not registered as a place of worship, and that the officiating clergyman had threatened to lodge an information against us, I drew up a certificate, had it properly signed, and sent off to the Abp's. register office in York the same afternoon, and preached in the house in the evening.

I never sought an introduction to the pulpits of the old established Unitarian congregations; but preached in them when invited to do so; and I made a point of not visiting the large and genteel congregations, until expressly requested to do it; that when I went among them I might feel myself quite at liberty, and preach among them with entire confidence. It was my fixed plan, from which I did not deviate, not to seem to

obtrude myself any where: indeed I considered that my work was not among the already established and flourishing congregations; but to spread the Unitarian doctrine where it was not known, to collect new congregations, and to assist those which were in a low and sinking state.

7.

In the course of my missionary life I visited most of the Unitarian congregations in the kingdom, and preached among them: I had the pleasure of being received every where with hospitality and friendship; and had much pleasant and edifying intercourse with the ministers and churches wherever I had time to enjoy it.

One rule which I prescribed to myself, and to which I rigidly adhered, was to have nothing to do with any differences which I found existing in congregations; whether between a minister and his people, between one part of a

congregation and another, or between neighboring ministers. Such unhappy circumstances will sometimes arise; but a missionary must have nothing to do with them; he must maintain friendship and intercourse with all the parties, decline having any thing to say about their differences, show an equal respect to all, do all he can to promote the general cause, and the true christian spirit in all.

The same rule I thought it right to observe as to political differences. When engaged as a missionary I found it necessary to avoid politics, not having time to attend to them; and to have appeared in any respect as a politician would have been injurious to my character and exertions as a missionary of religion, and might have exposed me to misconceptions and misrepresentation as to my object in traveling: and discussions on political matters once introduced would have prevented those which it was my aim to promote on theological subjects. With

particular friends I could converse on any topic; but the integrity of my character as an Unitarian missionary it was necessary to preserve by avoiding every thing disagreeing with it.

It is to me a pleasing reflection that through the whole of my missionary life I steered clear of all party squabbles, and avoided committing myself as a partizan in any differences which existed in any place which I visited.

When I wished to stir up the brethren to any particular exertion in the cause, or to the adoption of any particular measure; I thought it my duty to avoid every thing which looked like direct interference in what belonged to them to do, and contented myself with suggesting such considerations, and exciting them to such reflections, as would lead them to view things in the light I wished: and was very careful not to obtrude my advice, nor even my opinion, respecting what did not immediately concern my office and work, until it was called for.

8.

It may be supposed that the manner in which a missionary's intention of preaching is made known is of little consequence; but this is not exactly the case; it is important that it should be done in that way which will give it the most publicity, and appear the most respectable. The views and feelings of people, in different places, are different as to fitness and propriety, and should be consulted. In places where I had any friends or acquaintance I always consulted them as to which would be the most proper way of making the preaching known, and commonly left them to adopt the plan which they thought best. In places where I had no acquaintance, I enquired what was the usual method of publishing preaching, in particular in what way the Quakers made known their public meetings, and then acted as prudence dictated. The methods adopted were various. Sometimes by printed bills,

which when there was time for it, were posted; and sometimes the bills were carried round and left at the houses of the inhabitants of the place. Sometimes a friend or two would walk round a town and inform the people. Sometimes the preaching was advertised in the public papers. Sometimes the public crier was employed to make it known. People living on the spot will generally be found the best judges what will be the best method to adopt in any given place.

9.

Though preaching is the missionary's leading business, it is far from being the whole of what he has to do: he must labor incessantly to improve others by conversation. He ought to labor to acquire the habit of conversing with ease and freedom, and a readiness in the discussion of subjects, and in answering questions and replying to objections with clearness and conciseness. It is

absolutely necessary for him to possess an entire command of his temper, to be always calm and collected, and to treat all his opponents with liberality and kindness. I reckoned myself to excel in this part of my work, and thought that I sometimes did more good in conversation, and by the discussions in which I participated, than by my preaching. Very commonly after preaching in places where I was a stranger, as well as in some others where I had friends, we had a party together, sometimes a large one, for conversation and the discussion of subjects; when a good deal of animated debate would take place. In some places, in particular in Scotland, a conference would follow the public service, before the congregation departed. Sometimes, as soon as I concluded the service, some person would rise and ask me questions respecting the discourse I had delivered, make objections, or bring forward texts of scripture to be explained; and I had

to meet whatever came forward of this kind, by which I have been kept in the pulpit, in a crowded assembly, till ten or eleven o'clock at night. Wherever it could be done with propriety, I held conferences which sometimes issued in set public disputation.

I always endeavored to show myself free and easy of access; and studied to draw persons on to talk freely on religious subjects. It was my endeavor to render my company and conversation engaging and interesting; by sometimes relating a variety of anecdotes, incidents, &c., and by references to history, and bringing forward such things as might both entertain and instruct: carefully avoiding what might seem trifling or produce levity. Certain companies I have thought it necessary to avoid, when invited to join them, in particular at inns; because to have been found among them at the time would have been injurious to my character and usefulness. A missionary must be

careful with whom he associates at inns, when traveling; for those who do not know him will be likely to judge of him by the company he keeps. In going to a new place he must avoid connecting himself with either immoral men or unbelievers, though they may offer to receive and encourage him. Persons have sometimes come to me to talk about religion when not perfectly sober; of course I have refused to converse with them in that state and got rid of them as speedily as possible. I always thought it my duty to treat all men with whom I conversed or entered into debate, with seriousness and candor, and to hear patiently all they had to say; whether Jews, or Christians, Roman Catholics, disciples of Johanna Southcot, or of Swedenborg, or Quakers, or Methodists, or Calvinists, or Deists, or Atheists; for with persons of all these descriptions have I had to converse. I found it necessary, in all companies to guard against illiberal remarks and

censures upon absent persons: and have often told those who were animadverting upon the character and conduct of others, "I always consider myself as counsel for the absent party." This mode of acting was not only right, it helped to gain me the confidence of of those with whom I associated. It was a maxim with me, to avoid repeating in one place any thing of a personal or private nature which I had heard in another; and to have nothing to say about the private or domestic concerns of those whom I visited. If I visited opulent families in a place, I was anxious also to visit the poor; it would have been wrong to have overlooked them, nor did I ever intentionally do it; I considered them as peculiarly the objects of my mission, and paid attention to them so far as time and opportunity allowed me to do it.

10.

When a missionary goes on new

ground, he should be furnished with tracts to distribute; during my missionary life I distributed many at my own expence, but abundantly more at the expence of the Fund. I did the former voluntarily not wishing to involve the Fund in too much expence in this matter. I found different modes of distributing them necessary in different places and at different times. Sometimes they were given away at the close of a service; sometimes placed with persons in whom I could confide to lend or give them, as might seem best; sometimes persons came to my lodgings for them; and sometimes they were left at persons' houses as I traveled on, given to those I met, or placed where they would be picked up. Many parcels I sent to small congregations to assist them in forming a congregational library. Sometimes I distributed some thousands in the course of a year.

11.

A missionary must make up his mind

to endure much hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ. It will not do for him to consult his own ease or personal gratification. He must be willing to bear incessant labor both of body and mind; not shrinking from fatigue, nor declining any exertion the cause may require. However such a course may appal those who have been used to ease and indulgence; I know by experience that it may be gone through with, by a person in health, and in the prime of life, without serious injury; and that it will be productive of the highest intellectual pleasure. I do not think the exertion or toil seriously injured me, until I past my fiftieth year; since that time I have been led to go beyond what a regard to my health and constitution would justify.

In traveling and acting as a missionary I always adopted the most economical plans. I performed most of my journies on foot, and in walking thirty or forty miles, which I often did in a day, I seldom spent above a shilling or eighteen

pence in eating and drinking. I frequently preached in the evening after a walk of twenty or thirty miles. After walking six or eight miles, I usually stopped at some public house and took a small glass of ale, resting while I smoked a single pipe; and sitting down in a public room, without seeming to notice any one, I heard the conversation that passed, and sometimes learned more of mankind than I knew before. In the middle of the day I would take some bread and cheese, or a red herring. If I stopped all night at an inn, I seldom was at more than three shillings and six pence expence before I was off again in the morning; in Scotland or Wales sometimes not so much. When I had to spend an evening at an inn, I made a point of having a room to myself, where it was practicable. Walking is fine exercise, and when a man is used to it no mode of traveling will be so pleasant to him. A missionary should acquire the habit of walking well, as he will have to go

on roads where there are no regular conveyances, and it is not only by far the cheapest, but the most independent plan, the best mode of traveling to see the country and gain information. I have often met with persons as I have been walking, with whom I have had interesting conversation, and from whom I have gained information.

My mind was always made up to be satisfied, and to show myself satisfied, with any decent accommodation, however homely. I have after preaching supped on barley bread and sour milk, and slept in a bed on a clay floor, the room open to the thatch: but it was the best accommodation my friend could afford; consequently it was right for me to appear satisfied and pleased. The following night I have slept at the house of a merchant in Hull, in a room which was carpeted and had every genteel accommodation. But I rested as comfortably in the former as in the latter; and my friend, where the accommoda-

tion seemed so mean, did what he could to make me comfortable, equally with my other friend where the accommodation was so genteel. The diversity I met with in this respect was a source of entertainment, and produced no serious inconvenience.

It was my plan to give my friends where I was entertained as little trouble, and put them to as little expence as possible. If they were poor it would have been wrong to put them to any trouble or expence which could be avoided; if they were rich, and kept servants, it would have been wrong to occasion the servants trouble, as I could not afford to give much money to servants.

12.

It was a rule with me to be always punctual to my engagements; not only as to preaching, but also as to visiting, and the time I fixed to be at any given place. I arranged my plans and made my appointments with deliberation and

care; and when made, no weather, no company in which I might be, nor any thing, unless sudden illness which made it impracticable, prevented my executing them. This exactness and punctuality made those who knew me certain that when I had made an engagement I should fulfil it, they feared no disappointment; unless sickness interposed; and it was no slight indisposition that would prevent my being at a place at the time I had engaged to be there.

13.

When engaged as a missionary I was determined to devote myself entirely to the work, and to make every thing else subservient to it. I did not suffer the gratification of curiosity in seeing any thing new, in nature or art, nor any recreation or amusement, to divert me from it. My mind was made up not to take offence, where there was not an evident intention of giving it: but to pass by many things, that were not

pleasant, unnoticed: at the same time, I never passed by an intended insult, but showed my resentment of it; this I thought my character, and the cause in which I was engaged, required; yet if any concession was made by the person who offered the insult, I could easily pass it by. I studied to become all things to all men, in indifferent matters, and by accommodating myself to their taste and manners, so far as I could consistently with truth and a good conscience. I labored to acquire and communicate information which might be useful on a variety of subjects; and to serve my friends in any way which was in my power.

14.

I could not go on comfortably in the work any farther than I cultivated an habitual sense of the presence of God, had my heart raised to him, and cherished a devout frame of mind. Not that I presumed upon his support and protection, by putting myself unnecessarily

in the way of danger; I made a point of not traveling alone after dark, unless duty rendered it unavoidable; and in all cases thought the exercise of prudence proper. The cherishing an habitual sense of the presence of God, a sense of my entire dependance on and accountability to him, my living in the exercise of confidence in him, and looking to him for success and my future reward, gave me strength, kept my zeal unabated, raised me superior to difficulties and disappointments, led me to despair of nothing; and saved me from the fear of man, from hunting after popularity at the expence of truth, from the influence of flattery, and from seeking the praise of men.

Such is the course I pursued, such the rules by which I conducted myself, during my missionary life. I thank God for having enabled me thus to act,

CHAPTER V.

Proceedings in the Northeast District and parts adjoining, after the institution of the Unitarian Fund.

HAVING taken a general view of my connection with the Unitarian Fund, and the course which I pursued as a missionary; it remains to review my labors and proceedings, in different districts, during my missionary life.

I.

After I became a missionary of the Fund, my labors in the Northeast District were continued and extended; my visits to the distant parts of it became more frequent; and I preached in many places where no Unitarian congregation has yet been collected, and sometimes went to places and had theological conversation with persons where no opportunity of preaching offered. In the south of Lincolnshire I continued my exertions

as before, and also in the North Marshes; and shall briefly mention places which I occasionally visited in other parts of that county.

In Spalding I found a few persons favorable to Unitarianism, and preached a few times in that town, in a room which they procured for the purpose. I called sometimes on persons in several villages between Spalding and Boston, with whom I had religious conversation, and in some instances warm debates; but found no opening for preaching.

Between Boston and the North Marshes I found many openings both for conversation and preaching, of which I availed myself. At Friskney, a village south of Wainfleet, I preached once or twice, and when I went that way, generally had conversation and debate with persons of different religious parties. In Wainfleet, and a village north of it, I had a great deal of conversation with different persons. Taking another route from Boston to the Marshes, I frequently

stopped at Alford, a small market town, where I found several persons favorable to Unitarianism, and preached in a village three miles north of it.

About twenty miles from Boston, entering the South Marshes, I visited several places, and became acquainted with many persons, with whom I had a good deal of intercourse. When I visited them I preached a few times in Burgh, a market town, and many times in Orby a village two miles from it. In these places some of my hearers came from a considerable distance, and would keep me in conversation till the midnight hour was passed.

In the Marshes of Lincolnshire the roads are very intricate, and were then extremely bad. Twice I was lost and benighted in traveling there. The first time I was worn out with fatigue when I reached the sea bank, about eight miles short of the end of my journey; the night had set in, there was no place nigh where I could stop, and overcome

with fatigue and affected by the coldness of the air, I felt an inclination to lie down on the snow and indulge the disposition to sleep, which was almost unconquerable; but knowing that to do this might prove fatal, I roused myself and went on to the end of my journey. The other time, having to go a foot road about three miles from a village which I had reached when it became totally dark, to the place where I was expected to preach that night, I would fain have hired a person to conduct me; but the weather being very foul, I could not induce any person to do it. The road was through marshes lately inclosed from the sea, divided by water into different lots, and I understood there were deep holes, full of water in different parts of them. On one of these marshes I totally lost the path, the darkness was such that I could scarcely see my hand; I knew not what to do, a tremor seized me; if I attempted to go forward I might plunge into deep water and be lost; to

remain during a long night on the spot where I stood, in such weather might be fatal; and in the darkness, could I move without danger, I knew not to what point to turn my steps. My mind was raised to God for support and deliverance; and I became master of my feelings. I then considered which way the wind had blown during the day; and this gave, supposing it not to have changed, some little notion of the direction in which I must go. I stood still and surveyed the surrounding darkness, until I discerned distant lights in two directions. The one of them, but I knew not which, I supposed to be at a sluice by which I had to pass. Then, like the Indians in the wilds of America, I laid my ear close to the ground, and was able to hear the gullying of the water at the sluice for which I wanted to make. Still a great difficulty remained; how was I to recover the path which would lead me out of the marsh, which was surrounded by water? I had a

walking stick, and by feeling before me and on each side, at every step, I reached the side of the marsh; and so continued to feel my way by the side of it, till I found a foot bridge which led me out of it, and with much difficulty felt out the rest of my way. Once I traveled six or seven hours in those marshes in a most tremendous storm of wind and rain, and was wet through all my clothes nearly the whole of the time. Being engaged to preach that night, I determined if possible to be at the place where I was going by the time appointed; this I accomplished in safety. The storm tore up trees by the roots, overturned buildings, wrecked many ships on that coast, and broke a sea bank near Boston, by which a considerable tract of country was deluged, and many cattle and sheep destroyed. It was the most tremendous day in which I ever traveled; but I thought myself in the way of duty, felt composed and happy, and sustained no serious injury. God gives strength according to our day.

In my visits to the north marshes, I extended my exertions to the neighboring towns of Louth, and Great Grimsby. In the former I preached in an auction room. Once standing in the auctioneer's pulpit, before the service began, a man came in and asked what we were going to sell; it was answered, we have nothing to sell; but we have what we think of great value which you may have freely. At the latter, which is a borough town, I was once preaching in a barn, filled with attentive hearers; in my discourse I was laboring to show, that Christ was not sent to bless mankind by being righteous in their stead, but by turning them from their iniquities, and making them personally righteous. As I proceeded, I perceived that a man, who stood in the door way, was much agitated; at length he interrupted me, saying, "I have a message from God to tell thee that thou art a lying prophet." As soon as he said this I was about to ask him how he received

his message, and what proof he had that it came from God; and to assure him that I was not a prophet, nor the son of a prophet; but he prevented me, by adding, "I don't wish to disturb the congregation, I have said this to clear my conscience," and then walked off. This interruption did no harm; I went on with my discourse, and the hearers continued attentive. The man was a Calvinist, and his own party disapproved of his conduct. At another time my friends not knowing where to find a place for me to preach in, one of them wished to apply for the use of one of the Calvinist chapels, (there were two in the town) or the Methodist chapel, for a single evening. To do this I was persuaded would be useless; but as he was anxious to try their liberality, I said, "Then inform them, if they will let me have the use of one of their chapels, I will deliver a discourse on charity, and will not touch on any other subject." But not one of them even on these terms,

would allow me to enter his pulpit. One of the ministers, a Calvinist, told my friend, that he once had a hard battle with the Devil, who tempted him to believe that Christ was not equal to God the Father; but that he went upon his knees, and struggled in prayer, till he got the better of the Devil; and that he had resolved to have nothing to do with those who deny the equality of Christ with the Father. Did not this man mistake the convictions of truth for a temptation of the Devil, and call the suppression of those convictions in his mind a victory over the Devil?

In passing between Boston and Lincoln I called at different places, where I formed some acquaintance. In going one road I stopped at Billingay and Walcot, and had a good deal of conversation with persons who seemed inquiring after truth. Going another road, I visited Horncastle and Coningsby, at which places I preached many times.

Passing between Lincoln and York-

shire, I preached in several places, and had conversation with many persons. At Brigg, twenty-four miles from Lincoln, I frequently stopped and preached there once or twice. At Kirton in Lindsey (a district in the north of Lincolnshire,) I preached twice, and had much conversation with different persons. At Gainsbro' there was a Presbyterian congregation in a very low state. I was not known to the minister, but as I was likely frequently to pass through that town, I asked permission to preach in his chapel; this seemed to alarm him, and he would not grant it; though himself an Unitarian, on the broad principle. Afterwards, when I reflected on the matter, it occurred to me, that he might think that I was looking about the country for a situation, and his place being well endowed, and the congregation very small, (he informed me afterwards that he had seldom so many as twenty hearers,) there might be some danger in allowing me to preach

in it. I knew not how else to account for the alarm he discovered. Hence I wrote to him, informing him of my connections, and referring him to gentlemen in different places from whom he might receive information concerning me. At the sametime I sent him a copy of the Apology for Servetus, which I had not long before published. Soon after I received a very friendly letter from him, in which he offered me the use of his chapel whenever I went that way. Of this kind offer, I not long after availed myself, and preached in it on a week evening to a pretty good congregation. I have preached there many times since, and have had the happiness of seeing the congregation in a very different state to what it was when I first knew it.

At Epworth, about midway between Gainsbro' and Thorne, I formed some acquaintance, and preached there several times, once in the market place, to a very large assembly. In this town, the late Mr. John Wesley was born; and

also Mr. Kilham, the founder of the new connection of Methodists was born here. I was also in the habit of calling at a village about a mile and half from Epworth, where I had much conversation and once preached. At Kidby, a village a few miles from Epworth, I sometimes called and had religious conversation.

From the preceding remarks, to which may be added, that I distributed tracts pretty freely in Lincolnshire, the reader may conclude that the seeds of Unitarianism have been widely scattered in that county: and I have not mentioned all the places which I visited; intending only to take a general review of what I did.

2.

Once in a year, at least, I took a journey into the western parts of Norfolk; and visited Creak, and its neighborhood, where my friend, Mr. Kirby, who had been a Calvinist and became an Unitarian, was minister. During this journey I sometimes preached in several places;

viz. at Burnham, and Burnham Thorpe, as well as repeatedly in the chapel at Creak; and visited some Unitarian families who resided in that part of the country. This proved an unfavorable soil for Unitarianism; circumstances occurred which occasioned Mr. Kirby's leaving that neighborhood, and afterwards the removal of another family; which prevented the continuance of Unitarian worship at Creak. Still I doubt not but seeds of divine truth have been sown, which, though they may seem buried for a time, will ultimately spring up and produce fruit.

As yet there was no Unitarian congregation in Lynn, and no opening appeared for doing any thing in the cause in that town. At length a Baptist minister, a young man of rather popular talents, became suspected of heresy, and was illiberally treated by his Calvinistic connections, and finally driven from among them and from his congregation. There being many liberal peo

ple in Lynn, who were not satisfied with the popular notions and felt disgusted with the narrow plans and proceedings of the reputed orthodox, they espoused the cause of the discarded minister; and, the late Mr. Richards interesting himself in the business, a chapel was soon erected for him, and a new congregation collected. The money to pay for this chapel was chiefly raised among the Unitarians, and the congregation ranks as Unitarian. Though I had nothing to do with the original formation of this congregation, I visited and preached among them many times, and have been consulted by them when in trouble. They have had many difficulties to struggle through, many unfavorable circumstances have occurred among them, which appear to have retarded the progress of the cause in Lynn; but it is hoped that after all it will be firmly established, and that the lessons of experience will benefit both individuals and the congregation at large.

3.

In Cambridgeshire it never was in my power to do much, excepting in the town of Wisbeach.

To Soham and its neighborhood I was introduced by Mr. Aspland. Mr. Gisburne was then the minister of the Baptist church at Soham; but he was become an Unitarian. Soon after this the well known attempt to prosecute this good man, under the blasphemy act, took place; which issued in the complete defeat of his persecutors, the Calvinists, and in the triumph of liberal principles. Mr. Gisburne, having left the Baptist chapel, a new one was erected in Soham for Unitarian worship. At the opening of this chapel I assisted with Mr. Aspland and others. Before and since its erection, I preached many times at Soham, and at Wicken in a small chapel on Mr. Aspland's premises. I also visited and preached at Fordham, Isleham, and in Soham Fen. Though, for some years, the congregation at

Soham have not had a minister fixed with them, not being able to support one, Unitarianism has continued to make progress in that neighborhood; the seeds have taken root and continue to spread, and the ultimate success of the cause in that district is not to be doubted.

In traveling in Cambridgeshire I have visited several other places. At Chateris I preached several times, and conversed frequently with different persons. I made some visits to Sutton in the Isle, and had a good deal of conversation and discussion. Last spring I visited Cottingham, and had much interesting conversation and discussion with a minister and several of his people, who have given up the doctrine of the trinity, and are inquiring upon various subjects: I also furnished them with books both before and since I visited them. By conversation, the free discussion of subjects, and the distribution of tracts, I apprehend I did more in Cambridgeshire than by preaching.

4.

In the year 1809 an association was formed in the Northeast district. It was at first called an association of the Unitarian ministers and their friends, in Lincolnshire and Cambridgeshire; but this was not sufficiently distinctive, as there were Unitarians in the north of Lincolnshire not included, on account of distance, and after it was established there were some in Norfolk who joined it. The title, "Association for the north-east district," distinguished it from one more north, which had a prior existence, and from another formed afterwards to the S. E. of it. The first meeting was held at Boston, and it was agreed that the northern boundary of this association should be Lincoln, and the southern Soham; and that the annual meeting should be held alternately at Lincoln, Boston, Sutton, Wisbeach and Soham: an extent from north to south of about ninety miles. Lynn was afterwards, by the request of the congregation, included; and it

was agreed that the meeting of the association should be held there in rotation with the places before mentioned. A book society was afterwards established in connection with the association.

With much pleasure I witnessed the establishment and progress of this association. At its annual meeting, at the dinner, I have met an hundred and ten persons, ministers and their friends, in a district in which a few years before I knew not where to look for a single Unitarian. To witness the establishment of Unitarian churches in the most populous towns in the district, and their organization in one associated body meeting so numerously, and with so much zeal and mutual affection, annually, in a part of the country where I once stood alone in the cause, excited emotions which I cannot find words to describe. The annual dinner was on such a plan that the poorer brethren were not excluded by the expence being

what their circumstances would not enable them to bear. In some of the towns, where the annual meeting was held, such was the hospitality of the more opulent friends, that persons who came from a distance were entertained for several days, and in the evenings large parties collected together, when the most interesting conversation and discussion of subjects took place. These were times never to be forgotten the remembrance of them still warms my heart. Removed from that neighborhood, I have not been able to attend this association for several years; nor do I exactly know what is its present state. My most fervent prayer is, and ever will be, that the same simplicity, ardor, and freedom of inquiry, affection and zeal, unceremonious hospitality, and unity of spirit, which I have so often witnessed, may ever continue and increase; and that the churches on which I bestowed so much labor, and among whom I labored with so much

pleasure and success, may still increase, and abound in mutual love, in all the fruits of righteousness, and be filled with divine consolation. Brethren ye are my joy and rejoicing, may you be such in the day of the Lord Jesus.

5.

It may not be improper to state briefly the amount of the success of my labors, and of the labors of those with whom I acted, before I left this district.

Unitarian churches were established at Wisbeach, Lutton, Boston, Lincoln, Soham, and Lynn. In connection with the church at Lutton a small chapel was erected at Fleet, a room opened for public worship at Tydd, and another in the parish of Lutton, about two miles from the chapel; in all which places there are occasional services.

Though no congregation had been established in the marshes, the seeds of Unitarianism had been widely scattered there, and a foundation laid for much

future good; this also was the case in various other parts of Lincolnshire.

Illiberality and intolerance had diminished. In many places Unitarians were not viewed with the same degree of horror as formerly; and, though much bigotry and uncharitableness remained, a spirit of free inquiry had made some progress; and whenever I preached, especially in Wisbeach, I was much better attended than I had formerly been.

Though the reputed orthodox did not allow a change to have taken place in their views, they no longer talked of Christ's having reconciled God to sinners, and many of them had ceased to assert that God died. They had found it necessary to refine some part of their system, and to come nearer to the language of scripture. The progress of Unitarianism had evidently extended its influence to their improvement. They did not like to have the doctrines they maintained expressed in words which themselves had formerly used.

When the time shall come that a missionary can be supported in this district, and a person of suitable talents, who will labor incessantly, entering with all his heart and soul into the work, and can endure much hardship, regardless of difficulties, shall be employed in that capacity, it will be found that the way is prepared for the establishment of Unitarianism in many parts of Lincolnshire, especially along the coast from Boston to Grimsby, and in the towns near what are called the fens and marshes. Imperishable seeds have been scattered, and though he whose head has grown grey in scattering them, may not live to see them spring up, they will not be lost.

CHAPTER VI.

Further account of labors at Thorne and its neighborhood.—Hull—York—Selby.

BESIDES the district in which I resided, for several years after the Unitarian Fund was established, there was no part of the country in which I was so frequently employed as in Yorkshire.

1.

For many years I continued to visit Thorne, at least, twice in the year. A few persons became confirmed Unitarians, and met together regularly, and did what they could by reading, prayer and conversation, but for several years their number did not increase. If a few new converts were made, they did little more than supply the place of those who were removed by death. The people who were united in the cause were all poor; they met together in a room, and it was not without difficulty

they could raise the money required to defray the expences incurred by so meeting. Many times I walked from Wisbeach to Thorne, about an hundred miles, to preach a few discourses to not more than twenty people. Bigotry and uncharitableness greatly prevailed. The people were despised because they were few in number, poor and illiterate. Calvinists and Methodists, preached violently against Unitarians and Unitarianism. The most illiberal and scurrilous things were reported, and sometimes written on the tracts we put into circulation I found it necessary to write letters to several ministers in reply to their remarks, and in explanation and defence of Unitarianism. I never could get any of them to meet me to converse on the subjects about which we differed: a Methodist preacher had once engaged to do this, a time and place were agreed on for our meeting; but after all he declined meeting me. Nor was it an easy matter to keep a

newly formed Society, in such discouraging circumstances, who had been unused to the exercise of entire personal liberty in religion, and who possessed so little general information, united and harmonious. Personal differences and various misunderstandings would frequently take place among them. A contrariety of temper, when they were brought into such frequent and close contact, would sometimes produce discord. It was a work of time to teach them to bear with each others infirmities. Frequently, when I visited them, I had many things to settle, which called for the exercise of much judgement, prudence and patience. For a considerable time I seemed the bond of union which held them together. I had their confidence and affection; and they looked to me for counsel and direction in all their affairs as a society

In the midst of all these circumstances, I never despaired of the ultimate success of my labors at Thorne. I had

taken a deliberate view of the state of things among the different parties in the town and neighborhood; and had anticipated many of the difficulties which occurred; nor had I expected success without much persevering exertion. I am the more particular in my account of things at Thorne, because the success of the cause there shows what may be done by perseverance, and is calculated to encourage others, who may be in similar circumstances, not to despond, but to go on with steady and determined perseverance, not letting their zeal be damped, nor their exertions remitted. If the materials we have to work upon, and with, be not exactly what we would wish, we must be resolved to make the best we can of them, and do the best we can with them.

When I visited Thorne, I endeavored to find openings for preaching in the neighboring villages; and in this I succeeded. I preached a few times at Fishlake, about two miles from Thorne.

Once in a chapel on the levels; but could not gain admittance there a second time. At Hatfield a poor old man became a convert, and opened his house for preaching. I went there, at least once, whenever I visited Thorne, and the house was generally filled with attentive hearers. A person at Barnby-don, five miles from Thorne, also became a convert, and opened his house for preaching: to this place I went regularly when I visited that part of the country, and had many hearers. Thus though we made little progress in Thorne, the cause was extending to other places in the neighborhood; Unitarianism became a frequent topic of conversation, a spirit of inquiry was excited, and the way gradually prepared for what has since taken place.

2.

After things had gone on, as described above, for about five years, appearances became more favorable, several encou-

raging circumstances took place, and the Unitarian cause made more rapid progress.

A person of respectable character, and more information than his neighbors, who resided at Stainforth, three miles from Thorne, a hamlet of Hatfield and more than a mile from it, came to hear me preach. He was reputed to be an unbeliever, though it appears he was not really such; but he attended no place of worship. I was told, that when invited to hear me, he said, he did not expect to hear any thing about religion which would give him satisfaction; however, being urged he complied. I could perceive that he was much affected with my discourse: it was on the Sunday morning he came, and he staid at Thorne to hear me through the day. The next day I left that part of the country, and heard no more of the effect produced, till I visited Thorne again, several months after; when I found that a deep and lasting impression had been

made upon him, that he had procured and read several Unitarian books, and was become a zealous Unitarian. In Stainforth, where he resided, there was no place of worship of any kind, nor any profession of religion. He now procured a room for me to preach in, and I had a crowded congregation. His information and character gave him some influence among his neighbors. Several others became converts, and a room was soon after fitted up for Unitarian worship, in which meetings were regularly held, the friends assembling together at Thorne one part of the Sunday, and at Stainforth the other, and conducted public worship in the best manner they were able. This was the first place of worship of any kind opened at Stainforth. After this the Calvinists opened a room, then the Methodists, and then the disciples of Johanna Southcot. The Unitarians also were the first party who erected a regular chapel there; and when I was last in that neighborhood,

the church of England party were about to erect a chapel. It gave me pleasure to be informed that, since several places of worship had been opened at Stainforth, the morals of the people had considerably improved.

From the time referred to above, when I visited this part of Yorkshire, my labors were divided between Thorne, and Stainforth: at the same time I continued to preach at Hatfield and Barnby-don. I also procured Mr. Blake, who had a small congregation in Hull, to visit Thorne and Stainforth, which he did several times and was well received, till some unpleasant occurrences occasioned the discontinuance of his visits. As the converts to Unitarianism at Stainforth were in better circumstances than those at Thorne, more exertions in the cause became practicable, and its aspect in the view of the people of the neighborhood was improved.

Another circumstance took place about this time which was favorable.

A gentleman at Thorne, a lawyer, who was much looked up to in the neighborhood, and whose influence was extensive, came repeatedly to hear me preach, and expressed entire approbation of what he heard; and, though he did not live long after, he did us considerable service, by giving us his countenance, and saying in different places, that there was something of a religious kind now introduced at Thorne to which a man of sense might attend with pleasure. A son of this gentleman afterwards became an Unitarian, preached occasionally, and assisted the people much, before they had a minister fixed among them.

A third occurrence which helped the cause in the neighborhood of Thorne, was the countenance of Mr. Heywood, a barrister, and a member of the Unitarian congregation at Wakefield. He came to Hatfield occasionally to hold the manorial court; and on one of those occasions, learning that I went to Hatfield sometimes to preach, gave direction

that when I did so again, I should have the court house to preach in. Of this liberty I gladly availed myself.

Now the poor despised Unitarians in Thorne and its vicinity, began to be viewed in rather a different light, by their neighbors, from what they had formerly been: hearers increased, they began to be known to Unitarians at a distance, and received that countenance which encouraged them to think of building a chapel, and of having a minister to reside among them.

3.

In the year 1816 a chapel was erected at Thorne, and soon after an active young minister fixed with the congregation, as the minister of the united congregations at Thorne and Stainforth. The following year a chapel was erected at Stainforth, at the opening of which I assisted.

I had advised the friends at both the above places not to attempt to build, nor to go into any expensive plans, till they had well counted the cost, nor till

the cause had made such progress as gave a rational ground of hope, that they would be able to go through with the business, without being left burdened with a heavy debt. This advice they followed, and by the kind assistance of friends, in different places, had both the chapels clear of debt soon after they were erected.

They owe much to the exertions of a plain unlearned man, of good sense and steady piety and zeal, Mr. F. Moat, who made them known to the congregations in the west of Yorkshire, and who traveled six weeks in Yorkshire and Lancashire, at very little expence, and collected more than enough to pay the debt which remained on the chapel at Thorne. This good man is a proof, and I could mention other proofs, of what plain good sense, united with integrity, piety and zeal, can do.

I continued my exertions at Thorne, Stainforth, and in the neighborhood, until I saw the congregations in a flour-

ishing state; when this was the case, their chapels opened, and a minister settled among them, I considered my mission to that neighborhood as at an end, the purposes of it being completed. I have visited them since; but it has been as I have occasionally visited other regularly established congregations. It must ever give me pleasure to hear of their prosperity, and of the success of the cause among them. I can never forget the intercourse I had with them during the occasional labors of twelve years in that part of the Lord's vineyard. My attachment to them may be the stronger on account of the struggles we had in the cause of divine truth, and the difficulties we had to surmount in establishing Unitarianism in that district: besides, they were the first fruits of my labors in Yorkshire. But, alas! several of those who were my first friends in Thorne are gone to the grave. May we all meet in the brighter scenes of a future life.

4.

During my former missionary journies in Yorkshire I frequently visited Hull, and became intimately acquainted with the late Mr. Severn, in whose chapel I preached many times, and had much pleasing and edifying intercourse with him and his friends.

Mr. Severn was anxious to bring me acquainted with the Unitarian Baptists in Hull, of which there were then three societies. The late Mr. Greswōōd's was much the largest. He invited Mr. Greswood to his house to meet me. The object was to convince him of the propriety of a union among Unitarians, whether Baptists or not, and of their acting together in those things in which they were agreed, for the good of the common cause; but of this Mr. G. at that time could not be convinced: and he declined having any connection with me, though a Baptist, because I united and acted with those who were not

Baptists. Some years after, this good man had very different views of this matter; he became quite liberal, and united with his pedo baptist, and anti-baptist brethren, in the common cause of Unitarian christianity.

With another society of Unitarian Baptists in Hull, of which Mr. Blake was the minister, I had a good deal of intercourse. I preached to them frequently, and did all I could for their assistance; but owing to some disorders which took place among them my intercourse with them ceased. Mr. Blake was a man of strong natural powers, and had a considerable knowledge of the scriptures, but he wanted command of temper.

In my visits to Hull I soon became acquainted with Mr. Lyons, who was then a Calvinist minister; but was truly liberal, and a most interesting companion. I believe I was in some degree instrumental in his conversion to Unitarianism: and, after that conversion, I

prevailed on him to go on a mission to Scotland; by which mission he did much good. I have had the pleasure of enjoying frequent intercourse with Mr. Lyons since our acquaintance commenced.

It is gratifying to me to record that an association has been formed in the parts of Yorkshire of which I have been speaking.

5.

During my missions to Thorne, I became acquainted with the Unitarian baptists in York. This acquaintance was brought about by one of the York brethren coming to meet me at Thorne, and inviting me to return with him to that city. I afterwards made them many visits, and preached frequently among them. With the York Baptists, I had much conversation and friendly debate on a variety of subjects. I was ever treated by them with much respect and affection, and was greatly edified by their society.

When I visited York I had generally the pleasure of seeing Mr. Wellbeloved, whom I knew and highly esteemed before I ever visited that city; and of spending a little time with the students for the ministry, at the college; whose kind attentions I cannot easily forget. I also had several interviews with that excellent lady, the late Mrs. Cappe, who labored so much for the good of others. Of course it will be thought that my visits to York could not fail to be highly gratifying.

In going from Thorne to York, I several times visited Cawood, and preached to a small Unitarian Baptist congregation there, who are supplied on Sundays by one or other of the brethren from York.

Once I visited Doncaster, and preached in the Presbyterian chapel the whole of a Sunday.

6.

I repeatedly visited and preached at Selby. The first time I went in com-

pany with Mr. Severn and some gentlemen from Hull, and preached in the Presbyterian chapel. The minister of the chapel, a truly worthy man, had very few hearers: and I found, by what a gentleman, an inhabitant of Selby, said afterwards, that he supposed it to be a Roman Catholic chapel: so little were the doctrines believed by the few people who attended there understood by their neighbors.

Some years after, a room was opened for Unitarian worship by a young uneducated man, who preached gratuitously, and supported himself and his family by conducting a school for little boys. He had got many hearers together, and I preached to them several times. I advised them to form, and assisted them in forming, a committee to manage the Unitarian cause at Selby, and the minister of the Presbyterian chapel had the goodness to become one of that committee. Afterwards this young man and his congregation were allowed the

use of the Presbyterian chapel on a Sunday evening, and on week days when they thought proper to hold meetings. In this chapel, when I went that way, I preached to them.

Mr. Briggs, the young man mentioned above, has improved himself by reading and study, and the Unitarian cause seems to have made some progress, through his exertions, at Selby. He also preaches occasionally in several villages in the neighborhood, and has sometimes extended his exertions to a considerable distance. Selby is about fifteen miles from Thorne.

7.

Thus has Unitarianism spread in certain districts in Yorkshire, and chiefly among the poor and uneducated, where till within the last few years, it was unknown or only heard of as a frightful spectre, which haunted other regions, and whose approach was thought of with terror and dismay.

Such effects having arisen from such small and weak beginnings; and in the midst of such difficulties and dispiriting circumstances; ought to make the friends of Unitarianism fearless for the success of the cause, and encourage them to persevere in their efforts, however unfavorable appearances may be, or whatever opposition they may have to encounter. Let them remember, truth is omnipotent, and will sooner or later triumph over error. Let but the precious seed be sown, and every opportunity be laid hold of to water it, and in due time it will spring up and grow. The grain of mustard seed will become like the tree in which the birds can find shelter; the leaven hid in the meal will spread until the whole be leavened; the truth as it is in Jesus, as he and his apostles taught it, free from the corrupt mixtures and vile adulterations of erring men, will gradually make its way; mankind will awake from the slumber of ignorance, and burst the fetters of super-

stition; insulted reason will assert her prerogative, and the mind of man set free, raised from its degrading prostration, receive the impressions of heavenly truth. The earth shall be filled with the knowledge and glory of God; Jehovah shall be acknowledged as one, and his name as one; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.

CHAPTER VII.

Missionary Labors in the West of Yorkshire.

THOUGH not next in order of time, it may be proper next to notice my exertions in other parts of Yorkshire; that the whole of what relates to that large and populous county, may be the more closely connected.

1.

My first visit to Sheffield was in the year 1814. I was invited thither to preach a discourse on behalf of the Sunday schools belonging to the Unitarian congregation in that populous town. Besides which, I preached three other discourses to large audiences. I was gratified to learn that the collection for the schools, at the close of the discourse, was larger than any preceding one made for the same purpose. I spent several days at Sheffield, and had much

pleasing and edifying intercourse with Doctor Philipps and many of his friends.

From Sheffield, I went to Rotherham, and preached there one evening. A subject had been advertised by handbills, for me to preach on, before my arrival, and without my knowledge; but this was no uncommon thing to be done.

I visited Sheffield again, and spent a short time there when on my way to Wales, in the year 1816.

2.

My principal missionary tour in the west of Yorkshire was performed in the year 1818. Some account of it will be found in the Christian Reformer for July 1819. I was assisted in it by my worthy young friend, Mr. F. Horsfield. This journey had been planned for me by the late excellent Doctor Thompson, whose death could not fail to be lamented, not only as involving a great loss to the Unitarian cause, but to the cause of humanity and the general

improvement of mankind. Though not personally known to Dr. Thompson, I had corresponded with him, and had reckoned much on the pleasure of seeing and conversing with him, and of being favored with his advice and powerful assistance in the mission which he was so anxious for me to undertake. His death a few weeks before I commenced the journey, I felt to be a severe disappointment, and it deprived me of the great advantage I should have derived from his counsel and aid in performing it. His widow, a lady who appears to have been every way worthy of such an husband, did all she could to promote my success in a mission, the plan of which had been laid by one whose memory was so dear to her, herself being animated by the same holy zeal as glowed in his breast. At the house of her brother I was entertained in the most hospitable and friendly manner, during the time I staid in that neighborhood. This mission proved a suc-

cessful one, and I hope its ultimate effects may be highly important.

3.

I again visited Sheffield and preached there several times, I visited Stannington and preached there once. This is a few miles from Sheffield.

At Huddersfield I found a newly raised congregation, which met in a large room fitted up for the purpose. This congregation had been raised by the gratuitous labors of the ministers at Elland and Lydiate, who preached there alternately on Sunday evenings, and to do it the one had to walk about six, the other about seven miles, after officiating twice in his own chapel. To this infant congregation I thought it right to pay every possible attention. I preached to them five times, and Mr. Horsfield seven times. I spent much time in conversation with those who espoused the Unitarian cause. My object was to put them into the best plans of proceeding,

and to excite them to those exertions which seemed necessary to establish the cause among them. There seemed a want of union and joint exertion. They were anxious to have a chapel erected, and a minister fixed among them; but both for the money to build a chapel, and for the support of a minister, they were looking too much to other congregations. Several of the neighboring congregations were disposed to give them liberal assistance, so soon as they would give a pledge by their own exertions that such assistance would answer the end designed: this they had not done. I gave them the best advice I could, and after my return home I wrote them a long letter, stating plainly and faithfully wherein I thought them deficient, and the course which I ought to pursue. How my letter was received and how things have gone on since at Huddersfield I have not been informed. If proper plans be adopted, and carried on with zeal and perseverance, I have

no doubt but that a large Unitarian congregation will be established at Huddersfield; and it certainly ought to be regarded as an important Unitarian station. The friends of the cause ought not to be discouraged because they cannot do every thing at once; but to use such strength as they have, and do what is in their power: nor ought they to decline acting with others because they are not every thing they wish them to be: we have all our imperfections and defects, and should learn to exercise mutual forbearance, and do all we can to improve one another. The study of each person should be to discover and correct what is amiss in himself. Liberality and mutual kindness are peculiarly necessary in the infancy of societies, and the commencement of the cause.

4.

For some days my head quarters were at Browbridge, near Elland, a

place conveniently situated for the excursions I wanted to make in different directions, and where I found the most comfortable accommodation, at the hospitable mansion of Mr. Cartledge, Mrs. Thompson's brother. Once I preached in Mr. C's court yard, and another time in a large room; at Browbridge. At Elland I preached five times. One of the discourses was delivered by request on behalf of the Unitarian Fund. At Jaggergreen, two or three miles from Elland I preached in a room in which the Calvinists occasionally preach. At Lindley, a village about two miles from Huddersfield, I preached in the open air to a large assembly. At Brighouse, a manufacturing village, about three miles from Elland, I preached in a room crowded with attentive hearers. At Salter-hebble, a village midway between Elland and Halifax, I preached in a large school room. At Ovenden, a village about two miles west of Halifax, I preached in a large school room. The

room is intended both for a charity school and a preaching place: it was built by, and is for the use of all parties. At Mirfield, a very extensive village, seven or eight miles from Wakefield, I preached in a spacious room called the Castle Hall, supposed to be one of the most ancient houses in the kingdom; and had a large and very attentive audience; though the curate of the parish had on the preceding Sunday mentioned me by name in the pulpit, warned the people not to hear me, and declared the Unitarian doctrine to be most abominable. At Mirfield I was met by some gentlemen from Wakefield, who brought me a pressing invitation from Mr. Johnson the Unitarian minister, to visit that town. Also three other gentlemen, disciples of Johanna Southcot, came from Wakefield, as they said, to give me battle: we entered the lists immediately after the public service, and the contest continued till one o'clock in the morning. At Dewsbury, I preached in

the room in which the Freethinking christians hold their meetings, and had a good audience, though the curate of Mirfield had been there to warn the people not to hear me.

5.

My next temporary station was Lydiate. Here I preached four times to large congregations. The gentleman who was then the minister at Lydiate, was educated to be a Catholic priest, at the college at Liege; but I found him a zealous Unitarian minister, with a wife and nine or ten children. From Lydiate I went to Honley, and without previously expecting it, we found a respectable family there who were Unitarians, in whose house I preached, and had a very good congregation. Another evening we went to Crossland, four miles from Huddersfield, where I preached in a room which was opened for the Methodists, and had a good audience.

6.

Hitherto I had been much employed

in breaking up new ground; and according to my usual plan, I did not intend visiting the large and genteel congregations, of which there are several in the west of Yorkshire, unless invited by them to do it. Having received very friendly invitations from all of them, I arranged my plans so as to have a week to spend among them; without including Halifax, which, being invited to do so, I had previously visited. I ever kept in mind, that however gratifying it might be to me to spend time with persons whose minds were well cultivated, and to go among our flourishing congregations, my work was chiefly among the poor and unlearned; nor had I the vanity to think my style of preaching suited to the taste of the more refined part of society: and I should have thought it a violation of duty to spend my time where my services were not likely to be useful.

In Halifax I preached twice, in the Calvinist Baptist Chapel. The Unitarian

chapel being at the time under repair, and consequently not capable of being used; and the room in which the Unitarians met on a Sunday, for the time being, was occupied by a school on week day evenings; our friends obtained the loan of the above mentioned chapel for me to preach in. The Calvinist minister came to hear me both evenings, and throughout behaved quite liberally.

On entering the town of Bradford, I saw bills posted, giving notice of my preaching in the evening. I learned that there had been no evening preaching in the chapel in modern times, if ever, and there was no convenience for lighting it: however, lamps and candlesticks were put up for the occasion, and it was well lighted. A good congregation attended, consisting partly of strangers.

In Leeds I preached in the Mill Hill chapel to a pretty large congregation. Here also, not being in the habit of having evening services, candlesticks, &c.

were put up in the chapel for the occasion. In this, and the two preceding places, I had very agreeable interconrse with the worthy ministers and their friends.

The congregation at Wakefield is deemed one of the most opulent and genteel in Yorkshire. In this town I had engaged to spend a Sunday. I arrived at Wakefield early on the Friday evening. One of the gentlemen who had met me at Mirfield, a disciple of Johanna Southcot, but a respectable man, and his wife a member of the Unitarian congregation, had engaged me to go to his house, I went, when I found all in readiness for the renewal of what they called the battle. Mr. Johnson, the Unitarian minister, and another gentleman, an Unitarian, were there, also a Methodist preacher, whom the disciples of Johanna had called to their assistance in defending the deity of Christ. The controversy soon commenced, and we spent a long evening

in friendly disputation; candor and christian temper were preserved, and, though each retained his own opinion, it ended amicably.

The next morning I found that my preaching three times on the Sunday was advertised in the newspaper, and a short invitation included in the advertisement, to the public, to avail themselves of the opportunity offered of receiving information of the real import of the Unitarian doctrine. The preaching was also made known by printed bills. On the Sunday morning I preached on the death of Christ; the congregation very good. In the afternoon, on love to Christ; the congregation much larger than in the morning: we had friends from Leeds, from Huddersfield, and other places, with us. In the evening a very large congregation; the object of the discourse was to show that Unitarianism is the high-way of scripture. Many strangers attended. One gentleman of this description came to me,

when I came down from the pulpit, to thank me for my discourse. I learned that lights had to be put up in the chapel, as at Bradford and Leeds, on the occasion for the evening service. I was much pleased with my visit to Wakefield, and with the intercourse I had with Mr. Johnson and his friends.

7.

The disciples of Johanna Southcot, whom I have mentioned above, were the most intelligent and respectable of any persons of that description that I have met with. They were very anxious to have converted me to their opinions, and gave intimations which might have had influence, if I could have laid aside my understanding and conscience.

This journey was full of labor, and I had opportunity to scatter the seeds of Unitarianism on much new ground; several years have elapsed since this was done; wherever I preached I had many hearers, and they were attentive

to the word; but how far it has taken root in their hearts, and what fruit has been produced, I know not; this I must leave to the great Lord of the harvest; I had pleasure in my labors, cheerfully leaving the result with him.

Though I had a young man to assist me we were seldom together on a Sunday, then we generally separated to labor in different places, and frequently on week days we were working in different places in the vineyard.

A missionary might be constantly employed in the county of York; in many parts of it Unitarianism is unknown, and in various places there are persons favorable to it, who reside too far from Unitarian chapels to attend them. If each congregation in that county would contribute its mite towards it, with the assistance of the Fund, a missionary might be supported, to the great benefit of the cause.

CHAPTER VIII.

Labors in Kent, Sussex and Surry.

In no part of England, excepting Lincolnshire and Yorkshire, did I labor so much as a missionary as in Kent and Sussex; and my labors in those counties were attended with much success. Their commencement before the Unitarian Fund existed, has been mentioned in a preceding chapter, it remains to review what was done after that institution was established.

1.

My connection with the old General Baptists, was favorable to the success of my labors, in the three counties mentioned above, in which they now form a large proportion of the Unitarians; as it gave me access to all their pulpits, and I was received among them with great hospitality and friendship. Their churches are more numerous in Kent

and Sussex than in any other part of the kingdom. Their annual assembly, which is held in London, is the oldest association of Dissenters in England. They never were Calvinists, have always had antitrinitarians among them, and were distinguished by their liberality in times far less liberal than the present.

When my connection with them commenced, their assembly consisted of persons who differed widely in their religious opinions. The majority of them were antitrinitarians, some few were strictly Unitarians, and some were Trinitarians. Mr. Bennett, mentioned in a former chapter, being appointed to preach the annual sermon, at the meeting of the assembly, chose for his subject the miraculous conception. He treated the subject with ability, and as much delicacy as it was capable of; yet it produced a great deal of agitation, and some warm discussion. The following year I preached their annual sermon, and was told, that I should

have been requested to publish it, had it not been for some passages in it on the unity of God and the humanity of Christ. Since that time the assembly at large has become Unitarian.

For several years we had a public meeting at Deptford the day after the general assemby was held, and, after the public service, a large party dined together. At this dinner some important theological discussions took place. I preached at Deptford before, and a few times after, I became a missionary of the Fund.

At the time I first went among them, strict communion was maintained in most of their churches. It was in consequence of this I wrote and published an Essay on open communion. Some of the good old men were a little alarmed at my endeavoring to convince the churches of the propriety of open communion. However, strict communion is now generally laid aside among them, and baptism no longer insisted on as

the term of admission to the Lord's supper.

2.

I repeatedly visited different places in the south and east of Kent, though less frequently than the western parts of that county.

Dover I visited twice and preached there many times to large congregations. A few miles from Dover I spent an afternoon in conversation with a gentleman who had many years been an unbeliever; and he told me, that had the views of the scriptures and what they teach, which I had stated, come before him in the former part of his life he should have been preserved from becoming what he had long been. I understood him to mean that he should have been preserved from becoming an unbeliever. I have heard others make similar concessions.

The city of Canterbury I visited several times, and when I did so, usually spent several days there, and had a great deal of conversation, and some-

times debate, with different persons. I preached many times at Canterbury to respectable audiences. I also sometimes visited Sturry, a village near that city, and preached there once.

I preached once at Deal; I believe there had not been Unitarian preaching there before that time.

Once I visited the isle of Thanet, and preached at Broadstairs and Ramsgate. I know not that there ever was any other Unitarian preaching in those places.

Maidstone I visited repeatedly, and usually had many strangers to hear me, as pains were taken to make my intended preaching generally known. Had a great deal of interesting conversation at different times with my friends at Maidstone.

It is probable the Unitarian cause would have sunk at Chatham and at Rochester, had it not been for missionary exertions. Mr. Vidler went to Chatham and labored with success

at a time when the friends of the cause were so dispirited by unfavorable circumstances as to be ready to give it up. I visited and preached at Chatham many times, and at Rochester a few times, and had a good deal of intercourse with the people. I have reason to think my exertions did something towards the revival and re-establishment of the Unitarian cause at the above places.

At Sheerness a congregation has been raised by the labors of missionaries. Mr Vidler was the first missionary who went to this place, and he met with violent opposition from the reputed orthodox; however, his exertions were successful. I followed him sometime after, and had many hearers. A public meeting was kept up for some time by Mr. Hardinge; but on his removal to Bessell's Green, the public meetings at Sheerness ceased to be held. For a time the labor bestowed seemed to be lost; but this was not the case; Unitarianism had taken too much hold

of individuals to be rooted out. On Mr. Hardinge's revisiting Sheerness the cause was revived with more prospect of success than ever. Since which time I have visited that place twice, I preached many times to crowded audiences, and had much conversation with the people. Now Unitarianism may be considered as established in Sheerness.

3.

At Bessell's Green, near Seven Oaks, I preached many times; and twice in Seven Oaks. During my visits I spent some time with persons in the neighboring villages, and had much conversation and discussion with them. Once I spent an evening with a respectable man, who was a professed unbeliever. Almost the whole time was employed in friendly debate, about the scriptures, the evidences of divine revelation, and the objections which are urged against the truth of christianity. I was happy to learn afterwards, that what I said made a favorable impression on his mind.

The church at Bessell's Green, like many other of the Baptist churches which I visited in Kent, though now in a low state, is a very old one. Its records, which I had opportunity of examining, extended back to a period considerably anterior to the revolution of 1688. It appears that in those times of persecution, they assembled sometimes in one private house, and sometimes in another, frequently changing the place of meeting, to elude detection; and the members came to a resolution, that if any of them were fined, or had their property taken away, on account of meetings being held at their houses, all the others should bear their share of the loss or damage, and that any one refusing to do this should be placed under censure. I found by examining the records of other of the old churches, that the same resolution was adopted by them. Thus they had fellowship with each other in their sufferings for the gospel, and helped to support one

another when oppressed and persecuted, in those stormy times which try men's souls.

These old churches excite a peculiar interest on account of their having borne the heat and burden of the day during the reigns of the latter Stuarts, and having in those perilous times, firmly adhered to the dictates of their own consciences, and what they believed to be the truth of God: besides they were amongst the earliest falsely reputed heretics in the south of England, who were misnamed such by the self reputed orthodox: and more of free inquiry, christian liberty, and brotherhood, existed among them formerly, than among the general body of dissenters.

4.

To the weald of Kent my visits were frequent. To Rolvenden I went many times; and by frequent preaching, and conversation with different persons, contributed to the establishment of the

congregation in Unitarianism. This is one of the congregations raised by the exertions of Mr. Vidler, before he was an Unitarian. In this village I spent many pleasant days, and truly edifying evenings, at the house of a worthy friend, a member of the Unitarian church at Tenterden, whose amiable family I can never cease to remember with esteem. At the house of this gentleman I have sometimes met parties of friends with whom I have had interesting theological discussions.

I visited Tenterden occasionally, preached there several times, and had pleasing intercourse with the worthy minister, who has labored there more than fifty years, and with several of his friends.

I often visited Cranbrook, preached there many times, had a great deal of conversation with different persons, and many debates, frequently with large parties, on various theological subjects. The congregation at Cranbrook has

passed through many difficulties; unhappy divisions have taken place among them, by which the success of the Unitarian cause has been greatly hindered, both in that town and the neighborhood. Still it is hoped the friends at Cranbrook will rise above their difficulties and troubles. Could the breaches which have taken place be healed, and certain young men of talent be brought to use their talents for the public good; would they but lay aside all narrow views, and act upon liberal and comprehensive plans, the Unitarian cause would soon be in a flourishing state in that town, and might be rapidly extended to a number of places in its vicinity. Christians ought to forget past differences, and to do all they can to promote the knowledge of divine truth and the good of mankind.

At Headcorn I preached several times and had a good deal of intercourse with many of the friends, having repeatedly visited that village. There have long

been individual Unitarians in this place; but now the congregation at large seems to be such. Let open communion be adopted, and proper pecuniary exertions be made, and the Unitarian cause will soon be in a flourishing state at Headcorn. At Smarden, a neighboring village, there is a small congregation to which I preached once.

Being informed, when last in the weald of Kent, that Dr. Nares, who resides in Biddenden, and holds the church living there, and who has distinguished himself by his opposition to the Unitarians, had boasted that there was neither Methodist meeting, nor dissenting place of worship in his parish, I was anxious to deprive him of this boast, especially as it appeared that Biddenden was an eligible situation for the introduction and establishment of Unitarian worship. I found there were two Unitarian families in the village, and consulted with them on the subject. One of them had a room on his premises

which had formerly been registered for the Methodists. In this room I preached and had about seventy hearers. I advised that an evening lecture should be established at Biddenden, to be preached by the neighboring Unitarian ministers, either weekly or less frequently, as might be found practicable, and that the Unitarians residing there should hold a public meeting, at least, once on a Sunday. I have been informed that this advice was followed; and that there is now an Unitarian congregation in that place.

5.

In no part of the country south of London have I labored so much as in the east of Sussex. I went there frequently, and was continually employed during my visits, either in preaching, or in conversation and the discussion of subjects, for which large parties often came together.

Battle was the centre of my exertions in this district. In that town I preached

much, frequently to large congregations, sometimes on subjects of which public notice had been previously given. From Battle I made excursions to the villages in almost all directions, where I preached on week day evenings in private houses crowded with hearers: after the preaching I usually walked back to Battle, generally accompanied by a party of friends who came out to hear me, and as we returned we generally had some religious subject to discuss. In that town and neighborhood, for some miles round, the seeds of Unitarianism have been plentifully scattered, and if proper means continue to be used, an abundant harvest may in due time be expected

In the year 1818 I found the congregation at Battle in a very unsettled and disordered state. One part of it had adopted the opinions of the Freethinking christians, and were for following them in practice; to which the other part was firmly opposed: and a high

degree of animosity prevailed among them. Both parties were well affected to me, were willing to hear me and talk freely with me. They all continued to meet together, notwithstanding the discord and disaffection which prevailed among them. I resolved to try, however difficult the task, to bring them to a better state. I saw that if a division of the congregation took place, at that time, it would nearly, if not completely, ruin the cause; hence I resolved if possible to prevent it: though I might have thought, in different circumstances, a division the best thing; nor did I think it could be prevented ultimately; yet I hoped it might be delayed till its taking place would be less injurious. I preached many times, was heard regularly by all parties, and conversed freely with them on the points in dispute. I did all I could to revive mutual affection, and the true spirit of christianity among them, and in some degree succeeded; though the opinions of the leading per-

sons of both parties remained unaltered. Before I left Battle, I brought both parties to agree to continue together as one congregation, and to act upon the plan of liberty and mutual forbearance: so that no violence should be offered to the judgement or the feelings of any individual, nor the least compromise of principle be required. Sometime after, a division took place; but it was brought about gradually, and not till the circumstances were so far changed, that the congregation did not suffer materially by the secession of those who left it.

My last visit to Battle was in the year 1820, during which year I was there several times, and labored as usual both in the town and in the neighboring villages. I then found the congregation in a peaceful and improving state.

I made many visits to Northiam, which is nearly ten miles from Battle, and preached there a great many times, generally to large congregations, and had much interesting conversation and

many important religious discussions with the people. The congregation at Northiam has gone on in a steady and progressive manner ever since I knew it; and has for many years been firmly established in Unitarianism. There is much intelligence, simplicity, zeal and christian affection among its members. I have always visited and preached among them with much pleasure, and have been refreshed and edified by the intercourse I have had with them. May they long continue to honor the doctrine which they profess.

6.

An Unitarian association, which meets annually, has for some years been established in the districts spoken of in the preceding part of this chapter. This is of great importance, and its operations have already been beneficial to the Unitarian cause. It combines the exertions of the churches, and directs their zeal to proper objects. It gives efficacy to those plans which are devised for the

promotion of the general cause, as well as promotes union and brotherhood, and excites an increase of zeal.

My journies in Kent and the eastern parts of Sussex, during the summer of 1820, were performed with a view to prepare the way for engaging a missionary constantly in that part of the kingdom, and to promote the adoption of such a plan. I am happy to have to record, that, under the direction of the committee of the before mentioned association, this plan is carried into effect, and connected both with the congregations throughout the extensive district, and with the Unitarian Fund; and a zealous, prudent and laborious minister is employed as a missionary for Kent and the east of Sussex. Thus my labors in that part of the island have terminated in the way I most of all wished. Nothing is now necessary but for suitable persons to be found and employed, as local preachers, in different parts of the missionary's circuit, to second his efforts,

and supply new societies which he may be able to form. Thus may Unitarianism have a rapid and extensive spread in that fine part of the country. It is hoped this example will be followed, by similar plans being adopted in various other districts. It is what the cause requires, and only zeal and union are necessary to carry it into effect generally.

7.

My exertions were frequently extended to the middle parts of Sussex, and contributed something to the promotion of Unitarianism in that district.

I preached many times in the Baptist chapel at Lewes, and once in the Presbyterian chapel; and had a great deal of interesting conversation, and some important theological discussions, with different persons in the town and its vicinity.

With the congregation at Brighton I had much intercourse. When I first visited them they held their meetings in

a room which was very badly situated. In this room I preached many times. Afterwards they had a small chapel, in which I preached repeatedly. This small society passed through many difficulties; Unitarian worship was kept up, and the cause preserved from sinking, by the praiseworthy exertions of some of its members, and the assistance of the Unitarian Fund, and its missionaries. Mr. Bennett, who acted as a missionary, as well as minister of the congregation at Ditchling, for several years, preached at Brighton on a Sunday evening. It is hoped now a genteel chapel is erected, in which a respectable and learned minister officiates, the Unitarian cause will make more rapid progress in that populous town and place of fashionable resort.

At Ditchling I preached many times, and had much pleasant intercourse there, and in other places in its vicinity. An annual meeting is held at Ditchling, which is attended by many persons from

the neighboring congregations. Two sermons are preached on the occasion. After the sermons the Lord's supper is administered, in which the members of the different congregations unite. Afterwards the company take tea together in the chapel. Twice I preached their annual sermons, and was highly gratified with the proceedings of the meeting; which is held on a Sunday. Such meetings are well calculated to promote edification, and friendly intercourse and brotherhood among the members of neighboring congregations.

In the year 1820 I visited Cuckfield and Crawley. At Cuckfield there is a small chapel, which had been shut up some years; it had just been re-opened and I preached in it several times, to full congregations. I understand this chapel has been kept open ever since. I also visited several friends in the neighborhood. At Crawley there had formerly been occasional Unitarian preaching; but it had been dropped for

some years: I preached twice in a room crowded with attentive hearers; and had a great deal of conversation with different persons. I learn that since that time occasional preaching has been kept up at Crawley, and that it is proposed to erect a small chapel in that village.

8.

The more western parts of Sussex I visited but little.

At Horsham there is a large congregation, said to consist chiefly of Unitatarians. I only preached there one Sunday, and had not much intercourse with the people. What I saw of them pleased me.

At Billingshurst there is an increasing and improving congregation. This place I visited twice, and preached there three Sundays, besides week-day labors; I had much intercourse with the people, of whose intelligence and piety I formed a good opinion.

Chichester I visited three times,

preached there twice; had but little intercourse with the people.

9

Unitarianism has made but little progress in Surry; however something has been done to promote it during the last few years. I made two missionary journeys in that county.

The congregation at Mead-row, near Godalming, has increased much of late, and is now completely Unitarian. To this congregation I preached several times each journey.

At Worplesdon, there is a small but very old congregation. Its records extend back more than an hundred and twenty years, and its origin is still further back. It meets in a room which was erected for the purpose nearly an hundred years ago. In this room I preached both the times I was in that neighborhood.

At Wanborough, a gentleman who occupies a large farm, conducts two

public services on a Sunday, in his own house, and not only his large family and servants, but any other persons who choose to attend them. This is an example worthy the imitation of Unitarians who live at a distance from Unitarian places of worship. In this gentleman's house I preached and had sixty or seventy hearers.

There are some Unitarians in Guildford; but I never could obtain a place there to preach in. Nor could a place be found in the town of Godalming, though there was a small society of reputed Arians in that town.

I had a great deal of conversation with different persons in the places which I visited in Surry.

10.

As the General Baptists constitute a majority of the Unitarians, in the parts of the country spoken of in this chapter, it may not be improper to add a few remarks relative to them in this

place, and to drop some hints which may be useful to them.

Many of their churches are of very long standing, and have gradually become Unitarians. Some of them, it is highly probable, were all along Unitarians, at least, Antitrinitarians; it is evident many of their members, and some of their ministers were such; but it appears to have been chiefly on what is called the Arian hypothesis. All of them appear to have been Arminians, and that was formerly deemed being heretical enough. I can remember when Arminians were treated with as much illiberality, and were branded with as foul stigmas by the self-named orthodox, as Unitarians now are, and in some instances with greater scurrility. In early life, so completely was I imbued with the true Calvinistic spirit, that I sincerely believed it impossible for an Arminian to be saved. As for Arianism, in those days of uncharitableness, it was hardly possible to say any thing

worse of a man than to call him an Arian, at least, in many circles. It is a fact, that at the era of the reformation and long after, Antitrinitarians were chiefly, if not entirely, found among the Baptists. The first and last persons who were burnt alive for heresy, after the government became Protestant, were of this denomination. There must have been integrity and zeal among those christians, who, in such times, had the courage to avow themselves Arminians and Antitrinitarians.

Since my acquaintance with the churches referred to, most of them have made considerable progress in their religious views, and have improved in the liberality of their plans. They are now very generally complete Unitarians, their terms of communion are enlarged, and the interest they feel in the Unitarian cause is increasing.

It is painful to relate, that the fate of some of the old General Baptist churches, has been like that of some of the old

Presbyterian churches; the congregations have become extinct, and the chapels either suffered to fall down, or to pass into the hands of other parties. The cause of this I have been anxious to ascertain; and am perfectly satisfied that none of them have been ruined, or even injured by the introduction of Unitarianism among them. Not doctrinal preaching, but the want of it, and in particular the want of christian zeal, which doctrinal preaching might have helped to excite, of steady and persevering exertions in the cause of divine truth and for the salvation of men, which would have kept their souls alive, have been their undoing. In some instances, candor and liberality have been suffered to degenerate into cold hearted indifference. The fear of giving offence, and the love of ease, have sometimes led to the concealment of the doctrines believed, and an unmanly silence respecting the errors which are opposed to them, to the adoption of a mode of

preaching neither calculated to inform the judgement, nor to affect the conscience. A worldly spirit, there is reason to fear, has been at the root of these evils; this has led many to wish to stand well with their neighbors, and to be with the popular party, though to gain their point, they should make shipwreck of faith and a good conscience; this has greatly damped, if not extinguished, the sacred flame of piety and zeal for God and truth; this has narrowed the heart, and prevented those pecuniary exertions without which an effective ministry cannot long be kept up in the churches, nor the cause be carried on with success; this has led individuals to consult their own ease, consequence honor and gratification, more than the good of mankind. Such has been the baleful influence of a worldly spirit, wherever it has prevailed in any church, or among any party of christians.

These remarks are not made as ap-

plicable to the General Baptists at large, I rejoice that to many of them they are inapplicable; but they are designed to show what has been the bane of many of their churches, which once were flourrishing; to warn them of the evils which, if not watched against and avoided, may prove fatal to them also: the high regard I have for them, and a deep concern for the success of the cause of divine truth among them, has led me to warn them of danger so alarming. If their churches be not so numerous, nor some of them so flourishing as they once were, they ought to inquire the cause, and diligently to use all the means which, under the blessing of God, will insure future increase and prosperity.

CHAPTER IX.

Missionary Labors in Essex—Suffolk—and the Eastern parts of Norfolk.

My exertions in these counties were limited to a few places, and not frequently made; yet I have the happiness of knowing that they were attended with some success.

1.

To Saffron Walden I made several visits, and usually preached several times during each visit; and generally had strangers to hear me. My last visit was thought very seasonable, as Mr Philpot, who had been the minister there many years, was too ill to officiate, and did not live long after; and he was anxious to have my advice on some matters which involved the interests of the congregation, which he wished to see arranged before he died.

2.

I made two visits to Colchester. The

first visit I continued a month there, the second about six weeks. During my stay I preached regularly, and did what I could both in the pulpit and out of it, to instruct and improve the congregation, and give Unitarianism a firm footing in that town; but I had to regret that, though strangers frequently came to hear me, my exertions were not attended with much success. It is likely the Unitarian cause will, for some years, continue in a low state at Colchester; still every possible exertion ought to be made to promote it in so important a situation; and persevering exertions will ultimately conquer all difficulties. I was anxious to have preached in some of the neighboring villages; but could find no openings for the purpose. I was told that there were many persons in the town and its vicinity, who were either Unitarians, or favorable to the Unitarian doctrine; but who were either too timid, too indifferent to truth, or too proud, to show themselves in so despised

a cause, and to mix with a few poor people who espoused it. There is reason to think, were the congregation large and genteel, some such persons, who now stand aloof, and do nothing to countenance and support the cause in its low and depressed state, would attend the chapel, and contribute to its support, though in that case their aid would be less needed. I have found instances of this dastardly and unchristian conduct in different parts of the kingdom, of persons who would attend Unitarian worship where the congregations are genteel and opulent, but would shun the place where it is conducted when attended chiefly by the poor, and where Unitarianism is unpopular. What account will such persons give of themselves when they stand before the judgement seat of Christ?

I visited a village about six miles from Colchester, where I found two Unitarians, and had conversation with them; but could not induce them to

take any step towards the introduction of Unitarian preaching. They were too timid, too much afraid of the cross to show themselves in so unpopular a cause. Let all such persons remember the words of Jesus Christ, "He that is ashamed of me, and of my words, before men, of him will I be ashamed before my Father and his angels" And are not those who are ashamed of what they believe to be the true doctrine of Christ, ashamed of his words? Let them tremble at the thought of what may be the consequence of their cowardly conduct. Where is their reliance on divine providence, where their godly sincerity, if for fear of worldly loss, or to secure the favor of men, they put their light under a bushel, instead of letting it shine around them?

3.

I visited Ipswich three times, and once spent a Sunday there, when I had many strangers to hear me. In consequence of my preaching making some little stir,

a reputed orthodox minister said in his pulpit, that he perceived that Unitarianism was not quite extinct! It is curious, that while such persons discover no little alarm at the progress of Unitarianism, they affect to regard Unitarians as an insignificant sect, which is dwindling away and must soon come to nothing; but if they really think this is the case, how are we to account for their sounding an alarm everywhere, to put their hearers upon their guard against Unitarians and Unitarianism? Are they terrified at what they regard as a shadow which is rapidly disappearing? Whenever I visited Ipswich I had pleasant intercourse with several friends in that town.

I once visited Woodbridge; but in consequence of the stir in that town at the time about Mr. Frey, the converted Jew missionary, who was charged with having recently disgraced himself there by improper conduct, the few Unitarians I found in Woodbridge thought that it would not be prudent for me then to

make any missionary exertions. At another time I intended visiting that town; but when within three miles of it, received a polite apology for not being invited to do it. It is probable the Unitarians in Woodbridge think it would be useless to attempt any thing in the cause unless they could at once have a chapel and a minister; but however desirable this may be, if nothing is to be attempted till what is most desirable can be done, it is likely nothing ever will be attempted. Wherever there are two or three Unitarians, especially if they be persons in pretty good circumstances, something may be attempted with a prospect of success. From such small beginnings congregations have arisen in different places. If a proper sense of the value of divine truth, and the importance of the pure worship of the one God the Father, be felt, though there be but few persons to unite, if a spark of zeal for God and truth glows in the breasts of those few, they will let

their light shine; something will be done in the Unitarian cause.

At Grundisburgh, a village three miles from Woodbridge, I was more successful; chiefly owing to the zeal of one person, a man in trade, with a large family; but whose exertions were not hindered by the supposed difficulty of doing any thing, nor by the fear of man, nor any worldly consideration. This worthy person I never saw till I was in Suffolk in the year 1822. He had written to me sometime in the preceding winter, and invited me to visit him and try what might be done. I found two other men at Grundisburgh who were Unitarians. A room was procured for me to preach in, and a letter written to Norwich to have it registered in the bishop's office. Before the time came for me to preach, an alarm was sounded through the village by a Calvinist minister, and exertions made to keep persons from hearing me: notwithstanding this I had a large congregation, and spent several evenings

in interesting conversation with those who were inquiring after truth.

Thus the Unitarian doctrine was the first time preached at Grundisburgh; and though much opposition might be expected from the reputed orthodox, should this beginning happily be followed up with repeated, steady, and zealous exertions, Unitarian worship might have a fixed standing in that place; but nothing permanent can be effected without continued, steady, and zealous exertions. Whatever we are convinced is right and good, we should be determined to attempt however small our strength, relying on God, and not doubting but this our strength will increase as we proceed.

4.

Twice I visited Framlingham, and spent several days there each visit; nor can I ever forget the edifying conversation I had with Mr. Toms and his friends, with parties of whom I spent

most of the evenings. The simplicity, piety, and christian affection of Mr. Toms are edifying to behold; and to hear him relate a number of occurrences of former years is truly interesting, and sometimes quite affecting, from the pious and feeling manner in which he does it. So sensible are his friends of the worth of his character, that it is not unusual in speaking of him when he is not present, for them to use the expression, "The good Mr. Toms." Delicacy has restrained me from mentioning the sense I have of the worth of many excellent persons with whose friendship I have been honored; and should my aged and venerable friend live to see this, I hope he will pardon the liberty I take in speaking of him. Like some other aged servants of the Lord, whom I have the pleasure of knowing, he enjoys in the confidence and affection of his people, the reward of a life devoted to their service. At Framlingham I preached several times during each visit: and

once I preached in a village a few miles from the town.

Twice I visited Diss, and preached at Palgrave. In the latter parish the chapel (since removed into the town of Diss) was then situated. When I made my first visit I preached on a week-day evening; and spent a Sunday there when I made the second visit. I was well pleased with what I saw of the people.

I also visited Bury twice, and preached there each time on a week-day evening. Had pleasant intercourse with several friends in that town. The worthy minister of the Unitarian congregation at Bury has laudably exerted himself in promoting Peace Societies.

In some parts of Suffolk I visited individuals where there are no Unitarian congregations.

I have heard of some Calvinists in Suffolk, or on the borders of it, as well as in Huntingdonshire, and some other parts of the country, who have given

up the trinity; but retain the other doctrines of reputed orthodoxy.

5.

In the former part of my life I resided in the city of Norwich; and, whilst residing there as a minister, I gave up most of the doctrines of reputed orthodoxy. By a Baptist church in that city, of which I had several years been the pastor, I was excommunicated as a heretic and a blasphemer, after being tried and condemned by them in my absence, and several months after having had any connection with them, having been dismissed from my office among them that I might become the pastor of the church in Wisbeach.

Some years after these transactions I revisited Norwich, and supplied the congregation at the Octagon a few Sundays, when they were without a minister.

At another time I visited Norwich when on a mission in Norfolk and Suf-

folk, and preached there many times. At that time there were three chapels open in that city for Unitarian worship. I preached in all of them, and delivered several discourses on controversial subjects, and had some of my old orthodox friends to hear me.

I made a third visit to Norwich as a missionary, and had the pleasure of being present at the first meeting of the association for the eastern district, which comprehends the parts of the country spoken of in this chapter.

Once I visited Yarmouth, preached there three times, and had conversation with different persons.

Once I was at Hapton, preached there, and visited several persons in the neighborhood.

I also went to Foncett, preached there and conversed with some persons who heard me.

I also visited a respectable family near New Buckingham and preached in a place not far distant from it.

6.

Though Unitarianism has not made the progress in the eastern district, which it has in some other parts of the country, it has certainly made some progress there during the last few years. A new congregation has lately been raised at Harleston, by the exertions of Mr. Valentine, the minister of the congregation at Diss. The establishment of the association in this district, which has now existed more than ten years, was an important event; as its tendency is to bring the churches into closer union with each other, to promote the cause by the distribution of books, and by uniting the collective strength, and the joint exertions of the brethren, in different places, to give it a more powerful impulse.

CHAPTER X.

Missionary Labors in Scotland.

As large extracts from my journals, relative to my labors in Scotland, are already before the public, in the reports of the Unitarian Fund committee, it will be sufficient in this place to give a summary view of them, with such particulars as may be new to the reader. That Scotland has been an important field for Unitarian missionary labors, cannot be doubted by the friends of the Unitarian cause, who are at all acquainted with that part of the Island; and it is a field in which I have had the honor of being the chief laborer as a missionary.

1.

My first missionary journey in North Britain was in the year 1809: when I spent fifty days in that country, preached fifty times, conducted many cou-

ference meetings, and made various other exertions in the Unitarian cause.

In the year 1811, I performed another missionary tour in Scotland; when I spent eighty days north of the Tweed, preached sixty-eight times, and conducted various other meetings as before. My public discourses were on forty one different subjects.

I went a third missionary journey in this part of the kingdom, in the year 1814; which employed me an hundred and ten days, in which time I preached ninety-two discourses, besides conducting conference meetings, and making other exertions. The discourses were on forty-six different subjects.

My fourth and last missionary tour in Scotland was in the year 1817: when I spent twenty-eight weeks in that country, I was, as usual, fully employed during the time; but having lost my memorandums of that journey, do not recollect the number of discourses I preached.

On an average, during each of the above journies, I traveled nearly nine hundred miles in Scotland: and after my return from each of them, excepting one, I addressed a letter to the Scotch Unitarians; which letters were published. With much satisfaction I reflect on the pleasing and edifying intercourse I had with our brethren in the north, and the success which attended my labors among them.

2.

My first mission to Scotland, appeared to me an undertaking of greater difficulty, magnitude and importance, than any one in which I had previously engaged; and I prepared myself in the best way I was able. There was but one person in Scotland whom I had ever seen; and I found him on a sick bed, from which he never rose; but died shortly after. With another person, whom I had not seen, I had corresponded. My publications had circulated in different parts

of North Britain, and the letters on Election been republished there, without my knowledge. Among those who were free inquirers after truth, I was pretty well known by character. My worthy friend, Mr. Lyons, had already been on a mission among them, and the information I received from him I found valuable. I feared lest the Scotch people should have their expectation too much raised before they saw and heard me, and that my appearance, voice and talents, should not be such as they anticipated, and that their disappointment as to the instrument should prove injurious to the cause. To prevent this as much as possible, I wrote a letter, to inform them that I was a person of homely and rather mean appearance, that my voice was not sonorous and commanding, that I had no claim to great and splendid talents; but that I was a plain man, with nothing but truth and a good cause, and zealous exertions in that cause, to recommend me; and entreated them not

to expect what they would not find. Having understood that they were reluctant to admit an Englishman to their houses, fearing they could not entertain him in a manner sufficiently genteel; and wishing to have quite free intercourse with them, that I might do the more good; I informed them that I was a man of plain manners, without ceremony, that any kind of wholesome food, and homely entertainment, would be quite sufficient, satisfactory and pleasing to me; that I wished, while among them, to be upon those free, easy, and unceremonious terms with them, as christian brethren, which would best promote mutual edification, and be also most calculated to promote the objects of my mission. I write from memory, not having a copy of the letter; but this is the substance of what I wrote to them, and it had a good effect. They were not afraid of receiving me into their houses, admitting me to free intercourse, and we were at once on easy

terms with each other; nor did they seem to be at all disappointed with my public services.

I ever found the Scotch people hospitable, friendly, and disposed to do all in their power to accommodate and make me comfortable. The working classes I found much more intelligent and better informed, more serious, well behaved, and moral, than the generality of persons of the same rank in society in England: certainly more industrious, economical, and possessing abundantly more independence of mind; they respect themselves more, and have a higher regard to character: even their feelings of nationality are beneficial; for as they wish others to think well of them and their country, they take some pains to deserve their good opinion. The good effects of extending education to the mass of the people, manifestly appear in Scotland. The Scotch people have more close attention, and persevering application than the English; this, so

far as free inquiry is excited is favorable to the discovery of truth. Though they have a good deal of bigotry and uncharitableness, if their attention be once gained, they will pursue the examination of a subject till they are fully satisfied, and then steadily adhere to what they believe to be the truth.

3.

When I first visited Scotland there was but one congregation which was strictly Unitarian; the congregation at Dundee. The congregations at Edinburgh, Glasgow, and Paisley, were Universalists, and generally Antitrinitarians, many of their members properly Unitarians; but as congregations they were not fixed in Unitarianism. They were quite alive to the examination of subjects, had much of candor and of the spirit of free inquiry. As yet not a single Unitarian chapel had been erected, nor any public institution established for the promotion of Unitarianism. The different deno-

minations of dissenters, were generally Calvinists and Trinitarians, most of them strict disciplinarians, and very stiff in the assertion of their opinions, and in maintaining their peculiar plans. The Wesleyan Methodists had made but little progress. A considerable part of the ministers of the established church were become more free in their opinions, and liberal in their conduct. Among these who had begun to think for themselves, scepticism was more common than in England, and the number of professed Deists and Atheists was greater in proportion to the population. Rational views of God and his government, and of christianity seemed essentially necessary to stop the progress of infidelity. I found the people generally fond of the discussion of subjects, eager for controversy, and very confident of the correctness of their own opinions, and the conclusiveness of their own arguments. The opponents with whom I had to contend, though very forward

to enter upon the debate, seemed mere novices in the Trinitarian controversy, committed themselves very deeply at once, and appeared to have no conception of the ease with which their arguments could be refuted. Though warm whilst actually engaged in debating with me, and sometimes illiberal in their remarks, they afterwards treated me with much civility and respect. In my latter visits I did not find them so eager to enter upon controversy, many of them seemed rather anxious to avoid it.

4.

The first place I visited was Glasgow, and in that city I labored more than in any other town in Scotland. I arrived, after traveling two nights in the north mail from Liverpool, about six o'clock on the Saturday morning: and was met at the coach by a party of friends, with whom, after a few minutes conversation, I felt myself quite at home. In the latter part of the journey, I had some debate with a fellow traveler, on the

trinity; he was an inhabitant of Glasgow, a Cameronian. As publicity was favorable to my plans and objects, I informed him in what character I was visiting Scotland, and what I hoped to do there. This he soon communicated to others, and a considerable stir was made, and alarm spread among the reputed orthodox. After preaching three times on the Sunday, a conference was appointed for the Monday evening. A large assembly came together in which were many Trinitarians, ministers and others. The proposed conference became a set and formal controversy: a chairman and moderators were appointed, and a few short rules, to be observed by the disputants, suggested and adopted on the occasion. This public disputation was continued by adjournment for several evenings. It was attended by crowded audiences, and, I was told, that the last evening not less than two thousand people went away who could not get into the place where it was held; though it

was in the large room at Anderson's Institution. These public controversies, of course, made much noise, occasioned a good deal of inquiry and conversation, and, I think, did much good. During my stay I preached many times in Glasgow, and was almost continually engaged in conversation with different persons, when not employed in public services. One important measure which was adopted during my visit was the establishment of an Unitarian Fund at Glasgow. I also urged upon the friends the importance of having an able and active minister fixed among them, who might act occasionally as a missionary in other parts of the country. Some objections were made to this which I endeavored to obviate.

When I made my second visit to Scotland, a division had taken place in the congregation at Glasgow, and they met in two separate places; the larger party in the Trades' Hall, and the smaller party in Provan's Hall. Mr.

Yates had engaged to become the Unitarian minister in that city; and was soon after to commence his ministry. I was requested both by him, and his father, to spend what time I could there, and to preach on such subjects as might prepare the people for a proper attention to his services: this I was anxious to do, and, if possible, to effect a re-union of the two societies in one congregation. I associated equally with both parties, and preached in both their places of worship; in the Trades' Hall on Sundays, and in Provan's Hall on week-day evenings. I delivered nineteen discourses in Glasgow, most of them on doctrinal subjects. My largest congregations were estimated at from 700 to 800 people. A great deal of attention was excited; sometimes in the midst of my discourse several persons left the place; but the alarm these spread occasioned our hearers to increase. Mr. Yates came down to enter upon his office before I left Glasgow; the two societies

were united under his ministry; the Lord's table was proclaimed free, and at Mr. Yates' request, I administered the Lord's supper; about one hundred and fifty persons partook of it, and about two hundred and fifty remained as spectators while it was administered. After the Lord's supper we had a fellowship meeting in the evening. Thus the Unitarian cause seemed firmly established in the second city and most populous part of Scotland.

During my third visit to North Britain, Mr. Yates made a journey to England, and I supplied his place in Glasgow several Sundays, and also preached there on several week-day evenings; in all, I delivered seventeen discourses. After I had concluded the last public service, a considerable part of the congregation remained in the chapel; and, I was informed, they expected me to give them a farewell address, which I accordingly did; after this many still remained, and I could

not escape going through the painful business of taking leave of them individually; this nearly overcame my feelings: I was affectionately attached to them, and it was probable many of them I should see no more.

While on my fourth visit in Scotland, Mr. Mardon, Mr. Yates' successor in Glasgow, made a journey in England, and I supplied for him seven or eight Sundays. The congregation at this time was in an unsettled state, owing to the clashing of opinions and feelings among them respecting matters of discipline, &c. Soon after my arrival in that city, a deputation from the society waited on me, to request that I would preach on church discipline; with this request Mr. Mardon wished me to comply: accordingly I delivered a series of discourses which had a direct bearing on the subject. 1. On the nature of a christian church. 2. On christian liberty. 3. On the christian ministry as distinguished from a priesthood or dis-

tinct privileged order: and, 4. On church discipline. During this visit, I not only preached many times, but labored much to restore union and mutual affection, and succeeded so far as to leave the congregation in a state of peace and harmony. Soon after I reached Glasgow, I was informed that inquiry had been made by one of the magistrates respecting me, and that my preaching and conduct were watched by spies. This I cared nothing about, as I never meddled with politics in the pulpit; and if they chose to notice me for what they might call heresy, I had no objection to their doing it. The information led me to deliver a discourse or two on the duty of openly avowing what we believe to be the truth, and of obeying God in every instance rather than men. This was at the time when a prosecution for heresy was impending over my brother John.

Though from its first introduction Unitarianism has continued to make

progress in Glasgow and its vicinity, the congregation has not increased as might have been expected. The cause of this is certainly deserving of the most serious consideration. Without attempting to give any decided opinion, much less to censureany of my brethren, I may be allowed to suggestas matter of inquiry; Whether that regard has throughout been paid to the feelings and wishes, of all who are favorable to Unitarianism, which is calculated to bring them into the congregation and fix them in it? Whether every thing proper and practicable has been done, to stir up and encourage the exertions of the brethren, to edify one another, instruct their fellow creatures, and promote the Unitarian cause? Whether a due value has been set upon the working classes of the people, and a proper attention paid to their feelings? Whether in the arrangements made and the plans adopted, too much regard has not been paid to the making an appearance which

might attract the fashionable and opulent part of society, who after all have not been attracted, and which has operated injuriously as to others? Whether in the introduction of an organ in the public services, and some other matters, a proper regard has been paid to the feelings of the serious and pious part of the Scotch people? The deep concern I feel for the success of the cause, and the congregation at Glasgow, impels me to recommend these inquiries to those whom they concern; I do it with the greatest respect, deference and affection.

5.

I never visited Scotland without spending a good deal of time at Paisley, and no where in the north did I labor with more pleasure and success. No where have I found the working classes more intelligent, better informed, more candid, liberal and affectionate. This is saying too little; for taking them altogether they are superior to any

people of the same rank in society that I have met with; they are industrious, economical, hospitable, generous, manly, ingenuous, calm in discussing subjects, have a high degree of independence of mind, and conduct, and more delicacy of feeling and behaviour than is usually found in persons in their circumstances. The recollection of the friendly intercourse and christian fellowship I had with them still warms my heart, and raises the most pleasing emotions. With no people did I ever feel more at home, more union of spirit, or enjoy more rational entertainment. With them I could discuss subjects of any kind with the utmost freedom and confidence.

When I preached at Paisley in an evening, which I did frequently, it was common, at the close of the service, for some one to rise and ask me questions respecting the subject on which I had preached, or to mention texts of scripture which had a bearing upon it for me to explain, or to propose some sub-

ject for immediate discussion; this would keep me in the pulpit till ten or eleven o'clock, the whole congregation remaining all the time. I seldom spent a night in this town without having a large party, sometimes twenty, thirty, or forty people, with me at my lodgings, till a very late hour, for the discussion of subjects. Frequently in the day time we had parties together for the same purpose. If I went several miles from Paisley to preach in an evening, I always had a party of friends to attend me, and to escort me back to my lodging in that town afterwards; though sometimes it would be nearly midnight before we could be back. Some of them would accompany me to places at a distance; though their doing so kept them from home two or three days. We could get good congregations in the town, night after night, for several nights together. In passing from Glasgow to Paisley, a party of friends would meet me at the halfway house between the two towns,

and in returning from the latter to the former accompany me so far. During my first visit to Scotland I preached at Paisley eleven times. During my second visit twelve times. During my third visit fifteen times; and I believe during my last visit still oftener. We had always large, generally crowded, frequently overflowing congregations. When on my last visit, being informed that all the Deists and Atheists in the town were coming to hear me, I fixed on subjects which I thought suited to them; and delivered a series of discourses on the nature of moral evidence, on Atheism, on Theism and natural religion, on the nature, design and evidences of christianity: I gained the ear of the supposed Deists and Atheists, and they heard me patiently through all the discourses. I conversed with some of them, and found, that though sceptical, they were neither decided Atheists nor Deists.

6.

Though Glasgow and Paisley were

my head quarters when in the west of Scotland, I preached in many other places in the counties of Lanerk and Renfrew, and in a few in Ayrshire.

At Pollockshaws, a few miles from Glasgow, I preached several times in the town hall: here also we held conference meetings. The conference held during my first visit to Scotland issued in a public disputation, which was continued once a fortnight for a considerable time, and numerously attended.

In Rutherglen, a royal burgh, I preached in the town hall. At Patrick, a village near Glasgow, I preached in a room. At Parkhead, another village, I also preached in a room. At Hamilton, I preached once in a hall, and another time in a garden. At Wishaw I preached several times, once or twice in the open air.

Always, when I visited Scotland, I went to Carluke, and preached there to large congregations. I found many persons favorable to Unitarianism in this

place, and had a good deal of conversation with them. We had some meetings here for the discussion of subjects.

At Lanerk, the county town of Lanerkshire, I preached several times, once in the open air, had large congregations, and meetings for the discussion of subjects. At Carnworth I preached in a large room to about two hundred people. At Cairnstairs I preached on the public green, the church bell was rung to give notice of my preaching, and most of the inhabitants of the village came together to hear me. At Strahaven I preached in the open air to about three hundred people; and had a party together afterwards for conversation.

I several times visited Dalry and Kilwinning, and preached in both those towns: went to some other places in Ayrshire, but could find no opening for preaching.

At Renfrew, the county town of Renfrewshire, I preached several times, and had a good deal of intercourse with

the friends of Unitarianism in that place.

At the Brigg of Johnston, a manufacturing village, I preached to a pretty large audience. At Kilburchan, another populous manufacturing village, I preached several times, sometimes to crowded congregations, and had a good deal of conversation with the people. At Kilmalcolm I preached twice, and held a conference meeting. The three last mentioned places are between Paisley and Port Glasgow.

At Port Glasgow, I preached many times, had a great deal of intercourse with the friends of Unitarianism in that town, and did what I could to encourage them to unite together and conduct Unitarian worship. An Unitarian chapel is erected at Port Glasgow, and a minister fixed there.

At Greenock I preached several times, and had a good deal of conversation with different persons. Had proper steps been taken, and a right

course pursued, an Unitarian congregation might have been established at Greenock before this time.

Popular plans and missionary preaching are essentially necessary in the west of Scotland. The population in that part of North Britain is rapidly increasing; the people are active and intelligent; the seeds of Unitarianism are widely scattered among them; there are friends to the cause in many places where congregations are not yet formed: a missionary to go his round among them periodically, to preach to, and converse with them, to encourage them to meet together, and give them advice how to proceed, and to excite suitable persons among them to act as local preachers would do much good, and greatly promote the spread of Unitarianism in that extensive district. If little societies were formed wherever it is practicable, and each such society contributed a little towards the support of the plan mentioned, and each indi-

vidual who is a person of property and an Unitarian, did something to aid it, the plan might soon be made practicable, and be carried into effect. Nothing can be done without exertion, and the adoption of proper plans; and the exertion must be such as the case requires, the plans such as the state of the people and the circumstances of the times render necessary. It is useless to talk of the cause languishing, if we remain inactive, if we do not bestir ourselves to give it life and vigor. The west of Scotland presents a fine field for the spread of Unitarianism; and if it be not cultivated it will be a lasting disgrace to those who are capable of furnishing the means by which it might be done.

7.

Excepting in Glasgow, I spent more time in Edinburgh, and labored more in that city, than in any other place in Scotland. I considered the establishment of the Unitarian cause in the

northern capital, to be an object of so much importance, that I determined to devote all the time and exertion I could to the promotion of it. I was always received there with much respect and friendship, and treated with much kindness and hospitality.

The first time I visited the metropolis of Scotland, I found a congregation called Universalists, who were Anti-trinitarians, though not as a society strictly Unitarian. They then met in a very inconvenient place. I delivered eight discourses among them, to crowded and attentive audiences, and should have had many more hearers if the place would have contained them. I had a great deal of free and friendly intercourse with the people. They would have procured a larger place for me to preach in, but one could not be obtained. There were some individuals at that time who were steady, liberal and zealous Unitarians.

When I visited Edinburgh the second

time, I found that Unitarianism had made some progress, and its friends had considerably increased; but unhappily some differences had arisen among them, and they were divided into two societies. The one met in the Skinners' Hall Chapel, the other in a hall at the head of the Anchor Close, High Street. According to my usual plan in such cases, I associated equally with both parties, and preached in the larger place, the Skinners' Hall Chapel, on Sundays, and in the smaller place, the hall before mentioned, on week-day evenings. The one of the places was shut when the other was open, and both congregations heard me regularly during my stay in that city. This time I delivered seventeen discourses, had many interesting conferences with parties of friends, and much edifying conversation in a more private way. I urged them to procure a minister to officiate regularly among them, as soon as it could be made practicable; this appeared to me the only

way to effect their re-union, to preserve peace and order among them, and to give the Unitarian cause a firm footing in the second city in Great Britain. The public services were always well attended, the largest audiences were estimated at five hundred people. I was requested by the Skinner's Hall congregation to declare the Lord's table in that place free, and afterwards to administer the Lord's supper to all who chose to partake of it; which I accordingly did with pleasure; regarding this as another triumph of liberality.

During my third tour in Scotland, I visited Edinburgh twice, and preached there nine times. The congregations were always respectable, sometimes large. Had the pleasure to find Mr. now Dr. S. Smith, fixed there for a time as the minister. I was well persuaded that his character, talents and services, were calculated both to edify and give respectability to the congregation, and to promote the Unitarian cause in that

fine city. I remember with much pleasure the hours I spent in interesting conversation with that philosophic christian, and truly excellent man.

When I went my last journey to Scotland, the congregation in Edinburgh was without a minister, and I went down at their request in the midst of winter, that I might spend some time with them before the season for daily traveling arrived. Accordingly I spent three months with them, preaching three times on a Sunday, and doing what I could at other times for the promotion of the cause.

This congregation have had to struggle through many difficulties, many occurrences have at one time or other arisen unfavorable to the success of the cause among them. It is hoped ere long they will have a suitable chapel erected, that the excellent young minister they have obtained will continue some years with them, and that popular plans will be adopted which are calculated to ex-

cite the attention of the middle and lower classes of society to the Unitarian doctrine. They will no doubt, in all their arrangements and plans, keep in view, that the gospel is intended for the poor, that christianity is designed to be the religion of the common people.

8.

But few openings for preaching could be found in the neighborhood of Edinburgh, the district in which it is situated appears not to be so favorable to the spread of Unitarianism as the country around Glasgow.

I preached twice in Leith to attentive audiences. It seems desirable that occasional lectures should be delivered in this place, on account of its population, and nearness to the capital: this might help to promote the cause and increase the congregation in Edinburgh.

I once preached at Dalkeith, was pretty well attended; but could not find any opening for a repetition of my exertions in that town.

Once I crossed the water to Kirkcaldy, and preached there to about an hundred people, and had a good deal of conversation, on different subjects in theology, with some of them. At one time there was a prospect of a small Unitarian society being formed in this place: but it was blighted by some unpleasant things which occurred.

At Cupar in Fife I preached once to a small congregation.

Twice I visited a fine old man, living in a cabin near the foot of the lofty hills which run across Fifeshire, and had a good deal of pleasing conversation with him. He had been excommunicated many years before by the Scotch Baptists, for denying the trinity.

Several times I visited Newburg, and had conversation with an Unitarian residing there; but could find no opening for preaching.

I spent some time at Dunfermline, a populous manufacturing town, and preached in the open air to about five

hundred people, who were very attentive.

9.

At Falkirk I preached repeatedly, and held meetings of conference after the preaching; and had a good deal of intercourse with the few people who were favorable to Unitarianism in that town. The third time I was in Scotland I spent a Sunday in Falkirk, and, by the request of my friends, preached a sermon on behalf of the charity schools there. Of this, previous notice had been given by a printed bill, and in the newspaper. In consequence of this notice the managers of the charity schools, the day before the sermon was to be delivered, sent the crier round the town to inform the public they could not in conscience accept of any money raised by the Unitarians, and had an advertisement inserted in the public paper to the same purpose. This occasioned a controversy between them and my friend Mr. (now Dr.) Smith, then the Unitarian minister at Edinburgh

which was closed by a pamphlet which he published on the subject.

I visited Tillycoultry, a manufacturing village at the foot of the Auchel-hills, on the south side of them, several times, and preached in the open air to a small assembly.

In Dumblane I preached once, in the open air, to about two hundred people.

At Blackford, on the north side of the Auchel-hills, in Perthshire, I had the pleasure of raising a small Unitarian congregation. The first time I visited that place I found a few Universalists, who seemed free to inquire after truth; I had a good deal of conversation with them, but no opportunity of preaching.

The second time I visited them, I found one person was become an avowed Unitarian, and several others were favorable to the Unitarian doctrine. I preached in a room to about an hundred persons, and had conversation with a small party afterwards. The third time I went among them I found they were

become confirmed Unitarians; I had much conversation with them, and preached in the open air to an attentive audience. The fourth and last time I visited them, I found they had, from the time of my third visit, met together regularly on a Sunday, and conducted Unitarian worship, read sermons, and exerted themselves according to their ability, to edify one another and enlighten their neighbors: and they appeared to do much good. These people are a proof of what a few persons of good sense, steady piety and zeal, though in humble circumstances, may do in the Unitarian cause: they have given an example which is deserving of imitation.

The first time I visited Crief, I preached in the Weaver's Hall, had a good audience, and a conference with a few of the hearers afterwards. The second time I went there, no place could be procured to preach in, and it was too rainy to be abroad; of course I could

only converse with such persons as I met with. The third time I visited Crief I preached in a public hall: in the midst of my discourse about one third of my audience rose up and departed; the rest remained attentive.

10.

During each of my journeys in Scotland I spent several days at Dundee, preached there many times, and had a great deal of interesting and edifying conversation with the friends. The Unitarian church in this town has passed through many difficulties, its members have persevered in carrying on Unitarian worship, and in supporting the cause under the most depressing circumstances. The memory of their former worthy minister, Mr. T. F. Palmer, is still cherished by them with much affection. Since Mr. P. was removed from them, the cause has been kept from sinking, and the society preserved and edified by the pious and benevolent exertions

of a worthy gentleman, one of its members, who has been the chief conductor of the public services among them. Unitarianism has continued to make some progress in Dundee, and the congregation on the whole has increased, notwithstanding all the difficulties and disadvantages which it has had to surmount. As the oldest, and, for many years, the only Unitarian church in Scotland; this society may be said to have borne the heat and burden of the day; consequently the Unitarian public must feel peculiarly interested in its prosperity, and the success of its exertions in the cause of truth and righteousness.

I once spent a day, and preached in a village two or three miles from Dundee.

I once preached in Forfar, the county town of Angushire, in the Sheriff's Court-house. In the midst of my discourse about half my audience rose up and departed, after one of them had said aloud, "We will hear no more of it."

The other part remained attentive till I had finished the service.

Several times I attempted to do something at Arbroath, but could not succeed, never being able to obtain a place to preach in.

At Montrose I could find no Unitarians, nor any opening for preaching.

11.

Twice I visited Aberdeen. In that city and its vicinity I found several Unitarians; and though in humble circumstances, they were intelligent and warm hearted in the cause. During my first visit I preached four times, in the Gardener's Hall; the last two were crowded and overflowing audiences. The largest was estimated at five hundred people, and I was told that nearly double the number went away because they could not get into the place. I never saw hearers more attentive, nor who seemed to be more affected with what they heard. After the second service, a Cal-

vinist, who had been a hearer, addressed me as soon as I got into the street; he was deeply agitated, he combated the doctrines I had advanced with warmth, but without rancour, and came to hear me again. After the last service, as soon as I had done, a student stood up to address the assembly, I requested them to hear him patiently. We had some debate. He went on till the company told him he had better give over, that he was not equal to what he had undertaken. A large party, most of them strangers to me, accompanied me nearly a mile from the city; they seemed like old friends, and took an affectionate leave of me. When I visited Aberdeen the second time, I delivered three discourses in the Caledonian Hall, to crowded congregations; it was supposed to contain a thousand people: and had a good deal of conversation with the Friends of Unitarianism and others. The last evening I spent with them in conference. We parted affectionately.

12.

One more district remains to be spoken of, to which my exertions were extended during my two last journeys in Scotland, viz Roxburghshire and Selkirkshire. This was entirely new ground, not having been previously visited by any Unitarian missionary, nor had those to whom I preached ever before heard the Unitarian doctrine publicly preached. I found some Unitarians, but they had become such by reading and conversation. In the course of my third mission to North Britain, I visited this district twice, i. e. in going down and returning: and once in the course of my fourth and last mission.

At Jedburgh I preached in a public hall, and was well attended. After the service I had a considerable party together for conversation, and much debate ensued. I was opposed very strongly by several persons, in particular by a Burgher student, who pronounced the doctrine I maintained

and charged me with poisoning a considerable part of the country with it; after a good deal of debate he became more moderate, and we parted good friends.

At Darnick, a hamlet of Melrose, and about a mile from that town I found several well informed Unitarians, with whom I had a good deal of intercourse. In this place I preached many times in a carpenter's shop, and had always good and attentive audiences. Some of the hearers came ten miles over the moors, and with them I had interesting conversation.

In the town of Melrose it was difficult to obtain any place to preach in; however at last we procured a small barn in which I preached, and had an attentive congregation.

At Galashiels, a manufacturing village, I preached first in an assembly room, and afterwards in a private house: had many hearers, and a good deal of conversation with some of them.

In this district, if proper means be used, much may be done in the Unitarian cause, as there is a great inclination to hear, and many persons are favorably disposed. Should a suitable person be employed, as a missionary in the west of Scotland, this part of the country should be included in the circuit to which his exertions should be extended. Many openings might be found for preaching between Jedburgh and Glasgow.

13.

Since Unitarian missionaries first visited Scotland, a good deal has been done in the cause. The knowledge of Unitarianism has been widely diffused, by preaching, the distribution of tracts, conferences, public disputations, and conversation. The confidence of the reputed orthodox, in some places, in their dogmas has been lessened, and the friends of rational and scriptural views encouraged and inspirited. A considerable degree of inquiry has been excited,

and Unitarianism is become a frequent topic of conversation and discussion. Unitarian congregations have been established in some of the principal cities and large towns in north Britain, as well as in some smaller places. Some chapels are erected, and it is hoped others will be ere long. Several regular ministers are fixed with the Unitarian congregations. Materials for congregations exist already in several places where none are yet established. Individuals who are either Unitarians, or favorable to Unitarianism, are found in various parts of the country, distant from the towns where the Unitarian doctrine is openly professed. An Unitarian association has existed for several years, which holds its annual meeting alternately at Edinburgh and Glasgow. A great degree of liberality prevails among a large proportion of the ministers of the church of Scotland, and appears among many of the members of that establishment. The sectarian spirit and bigotry

which still remain among some of the religious parties, must gradually give way amidst the increasing light, and growing liberality of the times.

As it is highly probable I shall never visit Scotland again, I cannot refrain from adding a remark or two in this place. Our brethren in that country have a great work before them, they have still many difficulties to encounter, great and persevering exertions must be made; but they have many things to encourage them, and the objects at which they are called to aim are so glorious, that properly considered they cannot fail to furnish motives the most powerful. Let me exhort all who are convinced of the truth of the Unitarian doctrine, openly and fearlessly to profess it, and, wherever it is practicable, to join themselves to some Unitarian congregation, and regularly attend on Unitarian worship. Wherever there are a few Unitarians, whether they be rich or poor, however few in number, let me intreat

them to unite together, hold meetings, and do what they can: in this way the congregations already formed originated. If they do what they can, they may expect that God will give his blessing, and the cause will be promoted. Let every little society connect itself with the association, keep up regular intercourse with it, and collect and communicate to it all possible information that may be useful to the cause. As entire a union as possible of all the Unitarians in North Britain, and the most steady united exertions are necessary to bring into action the strength of the whole body, and secure the greatest attainable success. Where individuals are so detached as not to be able to unite with any congregation, they should not hold themselves freed from the obligation of doing their part, in a pecuniary way, and every thing in their power towards the promotion of the great cause. Every one in his sphere should do all he can to diffuse the pure light of genuine

christianity. In the present state of the cause, considerable pecuniary exertions are necessary. Without them chapels cannot be erected, able and efficient ministers supported, an effective correspondence with different parts of the country kept up, tracts plentifully distributed, and missionary exertions made. Individuals should remember that all they have they owe to God, that success even in their worldly affairs, depends on him; that God will not fail to reward their exertions for his glory and the good of their fellow creatures; that he who soweth sparingly shall reap sparingly, and that to him that giveth shall be given.

As the friends of the cause would wish to see Unitarianism become the religion of the mass of the people, which it is certainly capable of being, let them consider what are the best means of bringing them to attend to and understand it; let them prefer the plans which are calculated for the good of the many, to

those which are merely suited to the refined taste of the few; remembering that Christ came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for the many; and that he hath taught, that he who will be greatest among his disciples, must become least of all and servant of all.

As this may be the last time I may have an opportunity of addressing them, and these may be my last words to them, I intreat their candid attention to the hints I have taken the liberty of suggesting; and as our next meeting will probably be in the presence of our great Judge, may we all so perform our parts that we may see his face with joy, and meet in triumph. Thanking them for all the kindness I experienced when among them, I will never cease to pray for their edification, and the prosperity of the glorious cause of evangelical truth and righteousness among them. May God shower down his richest blessings on their churches.

CHAPTER XI.

Missionary labor in Cumberland—Westmorland—Northumberland—and Durham.

THE few exertions I had opportunity of making in these counties, so far succeeded as to encourage me to think, that could they have been more extended, and frequently repeated, important effects might have been produced among a people much more simple in their manners, and steady and moral in their conduct, than the inhabitants of the south of England. I mention this with a view to excite the Friends of the cause to devise some plan, for the spread of Unitarianism in an extensive district in which hitherto little has been attempted.

1.

On my return from Scotland, in the year 1814, I spent a few days in Cumberland. At great Salkeld, I found an excellent old gentleman, Mr. Nelson,

who had for many years been the Presbyterian minister in that place, and at Plumpton Street, a village a few miles from it. He was an Antitrinitarian, and had the most cheering views of the character and government of God. I had a great deal of interesting conversation with him. I preached twice at Great Salkeld, and once at Plumpton Street, and had pretty good congregations. The good old man was about eighty years of age; yet he seemed in good health, his powers quite sound, and was still active. He lived on a small paternal inheritance, which had been possesed by his family, for a number of generations. On a part of this estate stood the little meeting-house, which had been erected by one of his ancestors. This is one of the few places in that northern district which had not passed from the Presbyterians into less liberal hands. Here, amidst the surrounding shades of reputed orthodoxy, liberal and rational views of christianity,

and the mild and benevolent spirit of the gospel, still had an abode. Few if any of the neighboring ministers cared to associate much with a man, who could not acquiesce in their narrow views, illiberal spirit, and ostentatious and obtrusive plans; still he was cheerful and happy.

For ought I know Mr. Nelson is still living; but it will be well for our brethren whose situation in the north may enable them to do it, to do what they can to prevent the little chapels occupied by him, either on his death or the termination of his labors, from passing into the hands of the Calvinists; who certainly have no right to them. An active young minister, placed at Great Salkeld, might act as a missionary in Cumberland and Westmorland, besides officiating as Mr. Nelson's successor.

2.

When I visited Kendal, in Westmorland, there were two Unitarian congre-

gations in that town, the one Presbyterian, the other Baptist; but they are since united. When I went to Kendal I associated with the members of both congregations, and preached in both their chapels. I made several visits to that town, spent several days there each time, and preached frequently. Had much pleasing intercourse with the friends, whom I found intelligent and affectionate, and fond of discussing subjects freely.

I once visited and preached at Kirby-Lonsdale, and had a pretty good audience.

3.

To the counties of Northumberland and Durham I made several visits, preached in a number of places, and had a good deal of intercourse with the friends in Newcastle, Sunderland, Stockton, and some other places.

At Newcastle I preached many times, once or twice in the chapel in Hanover Square; but generally in a large room

in which Mr. Campbell's congregation assembled: had sometimes large audiences. Mr. Campbell had been a Calvinist, and became an Unitarian after he was fixed as a Calvinist minister at Newcastle. He afterwards removed to Kendal, and, after he had resided some time at Kendal, went to America, and, I am happy to learn, is officiating with success, as an Unitarian minister at Pitsburg in that country. His congregation at Newcastle was kept together after he left, by the exertions of my much valued friend Mr. Robson: with whose conversation I have often been gratified and edified, and at whose house I have always found much friendship and hospitality.

I visited North Shields twice, found a few Unitarians there, with whom I had a good deal of conversation. I preached during each visit, and had many hearers. Once I preached at a colliery a few miles from Shields, in the house of a plain illiterate man, who had become

an Unitarian and was zealous in the cause. He frequently had debates with his reputed orthodox neighbors, and by constantly referring to the scriptures, and keeping close to the plain facts and declarations of scripture, had the advantage in the controversy.

At Lemington, a populous manufacturing village a few miles from Newcastle, I preached to a large audience; and found several persons who had become Unitarians.

At Bedlington, another manufacturing village, about thirteen miles from Newcastle, I preached in a large school room, crowded with attentive hearers.

At Morpeth, being indisposed through too much exertion, I stopped two or three days, at the house of a friend who is since gone to America, and preached in the town hall.

4.

I visited Sunderland two or three times, and preached to attentive audiences. Unitarian worship was conducted

in this town by a respectable tradesman, with whom, and several other persons I had a good deal of interesting conversation. This worthy tradesman is the person who wrote the letters to a dignified clergyman, which appeared some years since in the Christian Reformer

At Stockton on Tees, I had much pleasant conversation with several well informed and respectable Unitarians, and preached several times, and also attended meetings of conference. I made two visits to Stockton, and should have made a third, but some circumstances rendered it not eligible. The congregation has passed through some difficulties; but it is hoped the minister who is now fixed among them will render the cause successful; especially as he has friends whose zeal will lead them to second his efforts.

5.

Since I was last in the north, Unita-

rianism has made its way farther north, in the district of which I am speaking. There is now an Unitarian congregation at Alnwick. Still the Unitarian doctrine is unknown in a considerable part of the four northern counties, and in the parts of Scotland adjoining, and from the towns I have mentioned, coming southward, till you arrive at York, no efforts have yet been made in the cause. This is a matter which calls for the deepest consideration. Is there nothing practicable which has not yet been done, to spread the knowledge of the pure doctrine of Christ, to diffuse the mild and benevolent spirit of the gospel, to dispel the darkness of reputed orthodoxy, and root out bigotry and uncharitableness, in those extensive northern districts?

For some years a tract society has existed at Newcastle; would it not be useful to connect with it a northern association? Surely it must be desirable to bring all the churches and individuals

who are friendly to Unitarianism, in the four northern counties, into as close a union as possible; to bring them together occasionally that they may stimulate each other to an increase of zeal, that they may by their collective wisdom devise plans for the promotion of the cause, and that all their latent strength may be called out, and their efforts combined, to give them effect. My respected friends in the north will pardon my making these suggestions. Individuals may serve the cause by distributing tracts in those places where no other means of communicating the knowledge of Unitarianism offer. Every individual should feel it his duty to do all that he can, in every direction, and in every possible way.

CHAPTER XII.

Missionary Labors in Lancashire and Cheshire.

THESE counties form one of the most important Unitarian districts in the kingdom: important on account of their population, the activity and enterprising spirit of the inhabitants, the state of inquiry and opinions among them, and the progress which the Unitarian cause has already made. During the latter part of my missionary life I labored more in this district than in any other, and my labors were attended with considerable success.

1.

My principal missionary journies in Lancashire and Cheshire, were performed in the years 1812, 1818, 1821, and 1822. During each journey I was employed several weeks, in the longest of them about three months, visited and

preached in a great many different places, broke up much new ground, originated several new congregations, assisted in reviving the cause in some old ones, had a great deal of christian intercourse with those who were already Unitarians, and made known the Unitarian doctrine in many places where it had not been heard before. When engaged in these journies I had to labor incessantly, both in the pulpit and out of it, and had to travel, almost daily, from place to place. Besides the above journies I several times spent a few days, sometimes weeks, in these counties, in going or returning from more distant journies, and at other times visited particular parts of them when not engaged in a general mission in the district. With the greatest satisfaction I reflect on my exertions, and their success in these parts of the kingdom, and the pleasing intercourse I had with the brethren there, from whom I experienced the greatest hospitality and friendship:

and I trust those exertions have laid the foundation of future good, which has not yet fully appeared.

2.

One part of Lancashire in which I labored with peculiar pleasure is what is called the district of the Methodist Unitarians. In 1818, I preached at the opening of their new chapel in Rochdale, and had overflowing congregations: and during my journies in 1821, and 1822, I preached in that chapel to large congregations. I also preached in five other places, within less than five miles of Rochdale, where they have occasional services, in some of them several times. At Newchurch, Rossendale, I preached several times during each of the above three journies, and had usually large, sometimes overflowing congregations. At Bacup I preached once, Mr. Ashworth had previously attempted it and was driven out of the village. At Rattenstall, I

preached several times, in a Baptist Chapel, both the minister and people had been Antinomians; I was the first Unitarian who preached among them. At Haslingden I preached several times to crowded audiences. The three places last mentioned are in Rossendale. At Burnley, a market town north of Rossendale, I preached once. At Padiham I preached many times to crowded congregations. Once I preached in a manufacturing village about eight miles north of Padiham, between Colne and the eastern foot of Pendle Hill, to a crowded audience. I also once preached in a manufacturing village about midway between Padiham and Clithero, to about two hundred people. At Todmorden, a populous manufacturing village, situated in a beautiful valley between the Lancashire and Yorkshire hills, I had the pleasure of originating an Unitarian congregation. I went there first in 1818. This was the commencement of Unitarian preaching in

that place. I preached at Todmorden several times during that, and each of my succeeding journies. I spent much time in conversation and conference with the people in this village, and had interesting debates with a very worthy young man, a professed unbeliever. One evening I preached in a village among the hills, about three miles on the Yorkshire side, to a crowded audience. Throughout this district there is a large population, manufacturing being carried on in all the vallies among the wild and barren hills, and amidst the bold, and in many parts picturesque, scenery. I seldom preached without having large audiences, even on week-day evenings, and on Sundays hearers would come from a distance of ten or twelve miles. I was heard by people scattered over a tract of country of not less than three hundred square miles, to whom till the last few years Unitarianism was quite unknown. The people in this district, though plain and homely, and somewhat

blunt in their manners, discover a good deal of manly and independant feeling, and appear to be greatly improved since Sunday schools have been generally established among them. They seem to me to resemble a strong luxuriant soil, which only needs cultivation, and will well reward the labor bestowed upon it. No plans could be better suited to them than those of the Methodist Unitarians. Their mode of preaching is plain, simple, affectionate and impressive. Their modes of proceeding are calculated to awaken inquiry, and to cherish a liberal and independent spirit. They are adapted to the mass of the people, to instruct and improve them to produce zeal and exertion, and bring into exercise any talents they may possess for mutual edification, and public usefulness. They have already done much good, and, proceeding as they have begun, they cannot fail to do abundantly more. The judicious, unwearied, and gratuitous labors of their ministers are highly deserving of praise.

Though while among the Methodist Unitarians seldom a day passed but what I had to preach, and few days but what I had some miles to walk, public preaching was but a part of the labor I had to perform among them. Very frequently we had parties together for conversation, and I had many things to confer about, and many subjects to discuss, with individuals. With them I felt a union of soul, a fellowship of spirit, and was refreshed and edified. The openness of heart, simplicity of manners, frankness of behavior, and fearless zeal in the cause of truth which they manifested, were quite to my taste. Their exertions in keeping up large Sunday schools, and in supporting congregational libraries are highly commendable. They have given proof of what the people may do, by their united, steady and persevering exertions, in the Unitarian cause, and for the improvement of society, even when they have no persons of much property or influence among them.

3

Three times I visited Preston, and preached there nine times; but my object in visiting that town was chiefly that I might preach in several places in that neighborhood where there had been no Unitarian preaching: though I hope I did some good in Preston, as much attention was excited, and many strangers came to hear me.

I preached in two villages, each of them two or three miles from Preston, and had many hearers. In the one village I preached in a farm house, in the other in an open field. But my chief success was at Houghton Tower, six or seven miles from Preston, several persons from that place came to hear me on the Sunday, and invited me to go thither and preach; this I accordingly did, in a pretty large room, which was crowded with attentive hearers. This was in the year 1821. Unitarian tracts being put into the hands of the people, and the worthy minister at Preston

being careful to water the seed which I had sown, Unitarian worship was soon after established at Houghton Tower. When in Lancashire in 1822, I received an affectionate letter from some of the friends in that village, in which they called themselves my children, and invited me to visit them again. I accordingly spent a day with them, had much interesting conversation, and preached in the evening to a large audience. I learned that the attention of some of them was first excited to Unitarianism, by a volume of my discourses, which one of them bought at an auction at Preston, without knowing who was the author, or what the doctrine taught in the discourses. They were then Methodists, the reading of the discourses led to a change in their religious views.

I preached one evening to a large congregation, in a manufacturing village near Blackburn; and had several hours conversation with a company of people

in Blackburn. Another evening I preached to several hundreds of people in Mellor, a manufacturing village, a few miles from Blackburn; and had a debate for some hours with several persons on theological subjects. This was in 1822, and Unitarian worship has been carried on occasionally ever since at Mellor. The above was the first time there ever had been any Unitarian preaching in that place.

4.

Several times I visited Bolton and preached in the Bank Chapel; and once spent an evening with a large party, which came together by appointment, for an evening's conversation. I also preached one Sunday in the Unitarian meeting house in Moor Lane; and spent some hours in conversation with a pretty large party of friends. Had first and last much pleasant intercourse with friends and parties of friends at Bolton, and found much hospitality among them.

Once I spent a Sunday at Walmsley, and another time preached there on a Sunday evening, and had good congregations.

One evening I preached at Derwin, a manufacturing place between Bolton and Blackburn, in a Calvinist chapel which was unoccupied, and the loan of it obtained for the occasion, and had a pretty large audience.

The first time I visited Cockey Moor was soon after the late excellent Mr. Bailey had become an Unitarian; and I was gratified and edified by his conversation. I have since spent some days very agreeably there. Once I preached in the Chapel at Cockey Moor to a large audience. Several times I preached in the large school rooms to many people. In 1812, being challenged by a gentleman, who was then a Calvinist, to preach on Isa. ix. 6, 7. I delivered a discourse on that text, in those school rooms, to a large audience; which discourse, I have been informed,

shook the gentleman's faith in the trinity, and he soon after became an Unitarian.

I several times visited Bury and preached there once in a large room, and afterwards twice in the Presbyterian chapel. I also preached in two villages in the neighborhood of Bury, the one called Heapfold, the other Catshole.

Once I preached at Ratcliffe, in the house of a gentleman, who conducted Unitarian worship there, for the benefit of his own family and his neighbors.

I once preached in the Swedenborgian chapel in Heywood, a manufacturing village a few miles from Rochdale.

My first visit to Rochdale was to the Presbyterian Unitarians, and I preached twice in their chapel, and once in Providence chapel, from which those who have since been called Methodist Unitarians were not then expelled. Afterwards when I spent a Sunday at Rochdale I preached in the morning in

their chapel, and in the afternoon in that of the Methodist Unitarians.

5.

The first time I preached at Oldham was in 1812, and I was the first Unitarian who preached in that town; though several persons residing there had become Universalists and Unitarians. I preached in a room which was crowded with attentive hearers. Several persons were anxious that I should preach there again before I left that part of the country, and engaged that if I would deliver a discourse, on a Sunday evening, on the doctrine of atonement, they would hire the theatre for me to preach in, and give notice of the preaching and subject by a printed bill. With their request I complied. They hired the theatre, and published the matter as proposed; but the orthodox alarmed the proprietor of the theatre, and he begged to be freed from his engagement, as it was likely to be to his injury. I went at the time,

and preached in the room which I had preached in before, and had an overflowing audience, though the Methodists had sent to a distance for a popular preacher to be there at the same time. After the service I urged those who were Unitarians to hold meetings regularly for Unitarian worship. This they agreed to do, and that excellent young man, the late Mr. B. Goodier, engaged to go over as often as he could to assist them. Thus commenced the Unitarian cause, and originated the Unitarian congregation at Oldham. I have visited and preached among them several times since.

At Middleton I preached in a room to a crowded audience. In this populous place Unitarian worship is conducted regularly by those excellent young men who act as local preachers in the Manchester district.

At Blakley I preached three times, and once attended a quarterly meeting of ministers and others.

At Dob-lane I preached several times, and had pleasant intercourse with some of the members of that congregation.

I once preached in a room about two miles from Dob lane, erected as a school for all, and free for the use of preachers of different denominations.

I once preached in another such room, near Aston-under-line, called a school for all, and a preaching room for all. In this place I had a large congregation. These rooms, much to the honor of the working people, were erected and kept open by them.

6.

I frequently visited Manchester. Once I preached in Cross Street chapel: once in the school rooms belonging to Mozley Street chapel: many times in the place opened for Unitarian worship in Green-gate, Salford; and once in a room opened for the same purpose in Chancery Lane, Ardwicke Green. Had a great deal of pleasant intercourse with many friends in Manchester and its vicinity.

When I visited that town in 1812, I was invited to spend an evening with a large party of gentlemen at an inn, when much interesting conversation took place. I also met large parties several evenings in one of Mr. Johns' school rooms. In 1821, when I was in Manchester, I was invited to a public supper, which was ordered on account of my being there, and I had the pleasure of meeting a large company; and a long evening was spent in a most animating and highly edifying manner; in the company were many young men, and a great display of intelligence and christian zeal took place.

I visited several places in Cheshire, not far distant from Manchester. Once I preached at Platt; and more than once spent a very pleasant evening at the house of a gentleman residing there. Several times I preached at Cross Street in Cheshire. Once I preached at Stockport on a week day evening, and spent some hours with a large party of friends.

Another time I preached there on a Sunday, and spent the evening with several friends. I once spent a day at Hyde, it was a working day, but we had public services in the morning and evening, and a large party of friends dined and spent the afternoon together, and also spent some hours together after the evening service. On this occasion friends had come together from various neighboring places. In some places which I visited, a kind of holy-day was kept, and the day throughout devoted to religious services, christian fellowship, theological discussion, and rational and friendly intercourse. This was the case in various parts of the kingdom, but especially in Lancashire and Cheshire: and where this was not the case throughout the day, a social meeting was often held after the public service in the evening. Thus my time was occupied, one labor rapidly succeeded another, and we were continually attending to something which had a bear-

ing on the great cause in which we were engaged. While I felt my mind excited and animated by these proceedings, I felt myself called upon to make great exertion, to render meetings held on account of my being present, especially when persons came from a distance, interesting; and to improve to the utmost of my ability the opportunity offered for promoting the Unitarian cause.

I preached at Dukenfield several times, had generally large congregations in that place; and a good deal of interesting conversation and christian intercourse with the friends.

7.

I once spent a day at Monton, we had a public service in the morning, after which a pretty large party, ministers and others, dined at the inn, and the afternoon was spent in christian fellowship and social intercourse. I preached several times at Swinton, in a room, in which a young gentlemen, who

acted as a local preacher, had collected a congregation, and once in the open air. In 1822 I preached at the opening of a room for Unitarian worship at Irlam o' th' Heights, about three miles from Manchester, and afterwards spent the evening in a company consisting of nearly fifty persons. I preached several times at Stand, and had pleasant intercourse with the friends residing at that place. Once I preached at Astley, a village about ten miles from Manchester, in the open air to some hundreds of people. Repeatedly I visited Chowbent, and preached there many times: I had much edifying conversation with different members of the congregation at Chowbent, from whom I received the most friendly and hospitable treatment. I preached three times at Leigh, and had large congregations: there had been no Unitarian preaching in this place until I preached in it.

8.

I preached five or six times at Chorley,

and had a good deal of conversation with different members of the congregation. I preached once or twice at Ormskirk. I preached five times at Hindley, and had edifying intercourse with the members of the congregation. I preached once in a hamlet of West Houghton; I was invited to go there by a stranger who came to hear me at Hindley, had a good congregation, and conference afterwards with a pretty large party. I preached once at Wigan to a large audience; the first time I intended doing this I was prevented by the illiberality of the magistrate, a Calvinistic dissenter, because the room in which I should have preached was not registered; though Calvinists had previously preached in it. Twice I preached at Park Lane. The congregation there had been brought very low, and I believe my preaching was one means of reviving it.

9.

I made many visits to Liverpool,

preached there many times, and had a good deal of intercourse with persons in that town. I preached once in the chapel in Paradise Street: several times in the chapel in Renshaw Street: several times in the room opened for Unitarian worship in Great Cross Hall Street, and attended some conference meetings in that place: and twice in the chapel in Sir Thomas's Buildings. Twice I attended the annual supper of the Great Cross Hall Street congregation. At Prescot I preached three times. At Knowsley I preached twice. At St. Helens I preached once. In 1822 I did all I could to excite the friends of Unitarianism in St. Helens to open a room for Unitarian worship; but at that time no place could be procured; however, not long after a room was obtained, and a public service established on a Sunday evening, which I conducted once when in Lancashire in 1822. This exertion in the cause not being immediately successful, should not prevent its being

persevered in; steady persevering efforts in a place where the population is so considerable, cannot ultimately fail of success; but without perseverance nothing of importance can be effected.

10.

I visited Warrington many times, preached there several Sundays, and sometimes on a week day evening: had a good deal of edifying intercourse with the Friends, and was treated with much hospitality among them. Twice I preached at Risley; once at Partington; once in a methodist place of worship on Stockton Heath. In a village about four miles from Warrington, in which a gentleman belonging to the Warrington congregation has a manufactory, I preached several times. At Knutsford I preached once; the service was in the morning of a week-day; and a number of gentlemen from Manchester, Warrington, and other places, who met there on the occasion, dined together at

an inn in the neighborhood, and the afternoon was spent in an edifying manner. At Dean-Row I preached once; at Hale once; at Congleton twice. I attended at the opening of the chapel at Altringham; when a large company of ministers and others came together, and the day was spent in an edifying manner.

11.

I made several visits to Chester, and preached many times in that city. Once I spent a month there, supplying for Mr. Lyons, while he was on a mission to Scotland. Twice I preached in a detached part of Tarvin, on the edge of Delamere Forest. I preached a few times to a congregation of poor people who had been Antinomians, at Kingsley, on the north side of Delamere Forest; also a few times in a farm house at Kelsall. I preached three times at Nantwich, and in five villages within a few miles of Nantwich; in some of those

places the preaching was in the open air, and the congregations large. *

12.

I cannot, in this place, refrain from expressing my sense of the obligations I am under to my brethren, the Unitarian ministers, in Lancashire and Cheshire, for the readiness which they ever showed to assist and promote my labors and exertions in the great cause in which we are all engaged; and the recollection I have of the pleasing intercourse I had with them, the happy hours I spent in their company, and the pleasure and edification I derived from their society. It would be gratifying to mention the names of some gentlemen to whom I feel under peculiar obligations; but I refrain from doing it, as

* In this chapter I have given a very compressed and concise account of my labors, so much having been already communicated to the public respecting my missions in Lancashire and Cheshire in the reports of the Fund Committee.

I respect and love them all, and wish not to seem to make distinctions, when for ought I know they all wished me God-speed, and certainly showed me respect and kindness. My ardent wish is to see their union strenghthened, and their utmost exertions united in promoting the one common cause. I wish also to express my grateful acknowledgments to the congregations in general, for the very friendly manner in which I was received and my services accepted among them, for the kind and hospitable treatment I experienced from individuals wherever I went, and for the truly christian intercourse with which they favored me.

If in any part of England, so far as relates to Unitarianism, the fields be white to the harvest, this is the case with respect to the two counties spoken of in this chapter. A variety of circumstances have operated to prepare a large proportion of the numerous population in that extensive district to attend to

rational views of christianity. The friends of the cause are already numerous, and they have property, talents, influence, all the means necessary, under the blessing of God, if rightly applied, to ensure success. Without taking upon me to suggest what ought to be done, I may be allowed to say, that union, zeal, and popular plans, are essentially necessary. To convert the mass of the people to Unitarianism, methods must be adopted which are calculated to win their attention, to communicate to them the knowledge of the Unitarian doctrine, and to show them that it is suited to their capacity and their wants. Laborers of different talents and attainments may be usefully employed. We may learn something from other denominations of christians, as to the plans likely to prove successful. Local preachers and missionary plans already exist in this important field of action: if these be properly supported, and extended as much as is practicable, and other aux-

iliary aids be afforded to infant societies, Unitarianism may, in a few years, be rendered triumphant in this part of the kingdom.

CHAPTER XIII.

Missionary exertions in Derbyshire—Nottinghamshire—Leicestershire—Northamptonshire—Huntingdonshire—Hertfordshire.

In these counties I only visited a few places, and that chiefly when passing through them, to other parts of the country.

1.

I once visited Derby; but week-evening lectures not being thought eligible in that town, and not being able to stop a Sunday, I did not preach there.

I had a correspondence with a sensisible young man at Melbourne in Derbyshire, and afterwards repeatedly visited that place, and preached there several times. The first discourse I delivered was in the open air, to many hundreds of people. I was informed that we were prevented having the use of the Baptist meeting-house, owing to the control exercised over the congrega-

tion to whom it belonged, either by an association or quarterly meeting of ministers. When congregations submit to such control they give up their liberty and independence; and those who exercise it play the pope among their brethren. I usually preached in a room which was procured for the purpose. There were Unitarians at Melbourne capable of conducting a public meeting, and it would have been well for them to have done it. I had much pleasant intercourse with them.

I once preached at Chesterfield, and had conversation with some intelligent persons in that town.

2.

I once made a journey to Nottingham, to preach a charity sermon in the chapel on the High Pavement. Being there I was requested to preach two other sermons in the same chapel. I had much pleasant intercourse with persons belonging to the congregation. Some of

the General Baptists in Nottingham were desirous of my preaching in their chapel; but this their minister would not permit; though a minister in their own connection, with whom I was acquainted, and who no more believed the doctrine of the trinity, or of the deity of Christ, than I did, preached in it on the same day that I preached on the High Pavement: it is true he had not made himself so conspicuous by his opposition to the popular notions as I had done.

I once preached at Mansfield; but some unpleasant circumstances existing in the congregation at the time, I had but little intercourse with the people.

I visited Newark once or twice, had conversation with some persons in that town, and wrote several long letters to one individual; but could find no opening for preaching.

3.

Frequently passing through Leicester, I preached there repeatedly, and was always hospitably entertained. For

some time, when I went that way I was invited to preach in the chapel belonging to the new connection of General Baptists; but the dread of heresy at length closed that chapel against me: after which, when I went to that town, I preached in the Presbyterian chapel. I had conversation on various subjects with different persons in Leicester.

I made several visits to Hinckley, and preached there repeatedly, generally to large congregations, as pains were taken to make the preaching known, and sometimes I was requested to preach on particular subjects, of which notice was previously given.

4.

In Northamptonshire, I had opportunity of attempting but little. I preached many times at Peterborough, and had frequently conversation with persons in that city; but no description of Dissenters, not even the Methodists, have been able to do much in Peterborough.

I once preached at Stilton, in a stable. I traveled several miles before I reached Stilton, in a heavy rain, and had to stand and preach in my wet clothes. I have as yet seen no fruit of my exertions in Northamptonshire.

5.

I made many visits to different places in Huntingdonshire; but found few openings for preaching in that county. I preached once in a chapel at St. Ives; but was not invited to do it the second time. I once preached in a small chapel at Fen Stanton. Besides St. Ives and Fen-Stanton, I visited, and had a great deal of conversation and theological discussion, with persons of different religious denominations, at Houghton, Hemmingford, Blundisham, and Erith. Once at St. Ives I had a debate with a Calvinist minister and several others on future punishment. At another time I spent an evening at St. Ives, in conversation and debate

with two Calvinists, at the house of a gentleman who was an Unitarian. Once I had a long debate at Hemmingford, with several Calvinist ministers and others on the Deity of Christ. Though I had little opportunity of preaching in Huntingdonshire, I scattered the seeds of Unitarianism, by conversation, debate and the distribution of tracts. There are already some Unitarians in that county.

6.

In going to or returning from London, I sometimes visited Hertford. Once I preached in the independent chapel in that town; and though the people expressed approbation of my sermon, which was on christian charity, they durst not venture to let me preach again as they found it would offend the Hoxton students who then supplied them on a Sunday. Thus Independents can sacrifice their independence, and suffer unfledged ministers, in the outset of their ministerial career, to exercise a

dictatorial power. At one time or other I had a great deal of theological conversation, and once some debate, with different persons at Hertford, and was hospitably entertained there.

At Royston I called several times, and was treated with respect and hospitality; but found no opening for preaching. However I had a good deal of interesting conversation with different persons, and once delivered a discourse to a small party in a gentleman's parlor.

CHAPTER XIV.

Missionary Labors in Warwickshire.—Worcestershire—Staffordshire—and Shropshire.

In these counties I made several missionary journies. I visited but few places in Warwickshire, still fewer in Worcestershire, and in Shropshire; in Staffordshire I labored more, especially among the iron works and in the Potteries.

1.

By the advice of the late excellent Dr. Toulmin, I spent a Sunday at Atherston, at a time when the Presbyterian chapel in that town was unoccupied. I preached in it three times, and had good congregations. Hearers came from Tamworth, and other places at a distance. The cause is since revived at Atherstone, and the chapel has for several years been kept open. The same minister officiates in that town and Tamworth:

this is much better than for either of the chapels to be shut up. If congregations would adopt the truly christian plan of meeting together, and conducting the worship of God among themselves, when without a minister, and proper persons were called to act as occasional preachers, the plan of one minister supplying two or more congregations would be rendered still more eligible, and some of our ministers would be better provided for than they now are; and by such a plan the Unitarian cause would be promoted.

I visited Coventry twice, and had many strangers to hear me, among others, I was told several ministers of different denominations. The chapel at Coventry is large and commodious, and, I understand pretty well endowed. The congregation has passed through many difficulties, and been brought to a low state; but surely nothing but union, zeal, and steady persevering exertion can be necessary, to make the Unitarian

cause flourish in so populous a town, and where so many circumstances are favorable.

2.

When I visited Alcester the congregation was nearly extinct. The minister appeared to have some zeal, but was too old and infirm to make the exertion necessary to improve it. He seemed rejoiced to see me, and was anxious that I should try what could be done.

The few persons that remained of the congregation thought the case hopeless, and that nothing could be done. Still I was resolved to make the attempt. I found two persons in the town who had latterly become Unitarians, they had some zeal and encouraged me to proceed. It was through the late Dr. Spencer they had become Unitarians. The Dr. had been a Calvinist Baptist minister in Alcester; but became an Unitarian, and preached Unitarianism. His congregation soon expelled him, and he went to Scotland to study medi-

cine. What the persons before mentioned heard the Dr. preach, made an impression on their minds, which some time after issued in their becoming Unitarians. I preached at Alcester first on a week-day evening, and was so well attended that I resolved to preach there on the following Sunday. On the Sunday I preached three times, and had good congregations. I have reason to think what I did helped to save the cause from sinking in that town. I learn that the chapel is still kept open; but am not informed of the present state of the congregation.

While at Alcester an instance of liberality was told me, which I feel pleasure in recording. The old minister before mentioned, during the preceding winter had a fall, and broke both his legs, and being poor, without any relation to attend to him, his case appeared peculiarly distressing. Some of his Roman Catholic neighbors made a collection among themselves, and sent him five pounds to assist him in his affliction.

This instance of liberality in the Catholics ought not to be forgotten.

At Evesham I spent several days, preached three times, and had much conversation with the people. One evening we had a large party together for the purpose.

I visited Kingswood several times. The first time I preached there on a Sunday to crowded audiences. Many persons came from a distance. In the afternoon I preached a charity sermon. Afterwards I preached there on a week-day. I had a good deal of conversation with the Kingswood people.

3.

Though I visited Birmingham repeatedly, and preached there several times, I made no long stay in that town, not thinking my labors necessary there. Once I preached in the new meeting, once in the vestry of the new meeting, at other times in the place which was opened for Mr. Little, after he gave up

Calvinism and became an Unitarian. I remember with peculiar pleasure the time I spent, during my visits to Birmingham, with that truly excellent, pious, and affectionate servant of Jesus Christ, the late Dr. Toulmin. The intercourse I had with him has left an indelible impression on my heart. By him I was introduced to the acquaintance of several respectable and worthy persons. It seemed to me scarcely possible for any person, who knew how to appreciate real worth, to know the Dr. whatever he might think of his opinions, without loving him.

4.

I made several missionary visits to the district west of Birmingham, in which are the iron works. The first time I was at Coseley, I preached a charity sermon, and three others; and whenever I went to the neighborhood, I preached in that place. I also preached at Bilston, and at Dalliston; and visited

many persons in different parts of the district. Once I preached at Oldbury. Sometimes I visited West Broomwich. I was much pleased with the conversation of a poor, illiterate old man, at Dalliston, who had become an Unitarian, and talked on the subject in a most feeling and edifying manner, rejoicing greatly in the character of God as a father.

I preached several times at Wolverhampton, and had edifying conversation with the people. It was through me the congregation at Wolverhampton became acquainted with Mr. Steward, the minister who involved them in so much trouble. He, knowing that they wanted a minister, requested me to write to them concerning him. As I knew how he was then situated, I could not do less than write; but my letter could not be called a recommendation, it barely mentioned that he was at liberty, and stated the reasons of his not suiting the congregation where he then

was. I certainly did not expect he would act the part which he afterwards acted; yet I had not confidence enough in him to write otherwise than with studied caution.

5

To the Potteries in Staffordshire I made three missionary journies. The first was in the year 1812. At that time I found two or three Unitarians, and a few other persons who were favorably disposed. At Newcastle a Methodist chapel was obtained for me to preach in, and having ascertained that the Methodists knew what they had to expect me to preach, I delivered a plain Unitarian discourse to a pretty large and attentive audience. At this time the Presbyterian chapel, which had been shut up for some years, was lost, but has since been recovered. At Hanley I preached in a Calvinist chapel, which was unoccupied, and had many hearers. I had a good deal of conversation with the people whom I found

favorable to Unitarianism, and with such others as chose to talk with me, in both places. Though I heard nothing of the effects produced by these efforts, for several years it appears that the seed scattered at that time was not lost.

About nine years elapsed before I had opportunity of making another missionary visit to Newcastle and the Potteries. In the mean time the truth had continued to operate like the leaven in the meal, and things gradually came into a more favorable state. The chapel at Newcastle was recovered, repaired, and re-opened; and public worship conducted in it once on a Sunday. A greater disposition to attend to the Unitarian doctrine appeared at Hanley, and some individuals seemed favorable to it in other parts of the Potteries. A worthy friend of the cause wrote to me on the subject, and stated, that they wished to have a minister fixed among them, who might officiate both at Newcastle and at Hanley. Just then Mr. Cooper, who

had formerly gone some missionary journeys with me, returned from Jamaica, where he had been on a mission among the Negroes. He was invited, and accepted the situation. Such was the state of things when I made my second missionary visit to that district, in the year 1821. During this visit I preached many times both at Newcastle, and Hanley; and I had always crowded congregations at the latter place. I also preached once at Lane-end. During my visit I had a great deal of conversation with different persons, and the last afternoon a debate with some Calvinists and Methodists respecting the object of prayer. During the debate they discovered much more rudeness than strength of argument. From this time I considered the Unitarian cause as having obtained a pretty firm footing in this populous district.

My last missionary visit to the Potteries was in the summer of 1822, when I found the Unitarian cause had made

considerable progress since I was there in the preceding year, especially in Hanley; in which town it seemed necessary to erect a chapel without further delay. I again preached several times both at Newcastle and at Hanley, and once in a village called Redstreet; in which village I recommended that occasional evening lectures should be delivered: I also advised Mr. Cooper to deliver such occasional lectures whereever he could find openings in the neighborhood for the purpose. During my stay I visited as many friends as I well could, and did what I could to strengthen their hands and promote the cause among them. Before I left I met the leading friends, to assist them in arranging and digesting a plan for the erection of a chapel at Hanley.

The introduction and establishment of Unitarianism in this district, must be regarded by the friends of the Unitarian cause as a matter of great importance; on account of the great and rapidly in-

creasing population, its distance from the other districts where Unitarian churches are planted, there not being one within many miles of it; and on account of its being a central part of an extensive tract of country in which Unitarianism is little known, from which it may be communicated to many other places in different directions, and this may be done the more readily as its trade keeps up a frequent intercourse between the inhabitants of this district and those of the surrounding country. Nor could any town in the Potteries have been fixed on as more proper, from its relative situation, to be made a leading station for the establishment of Unitarianism than Hanley. It is hoped the Unitarian public will afford the assistance necessary, that a chapel may be erected, and the cause carried on with success in this important district. The little I was enabled to do towards the introduction and establishment of the Unitarian cause in the Potteries, I am far from

regarding as the least important of my missionary labors.

6.

I made one missionary visit to Whitchurch, in Shropshire, preached there four times, and had some pleasant intercourse with the friends of Unitarianism in that town. In Shropshire, little has yet been attempted in the Unitarian cause; may it not be hoped that plans will be devised to diffuse liberal and rational views of christianity in that and some other counties, where the people in general know nothing of Unitarianism but from those who misrepresent it, and do all they can to make it appear absurd and dangerous? Where there are any Unitarians in such districts, ought they not to do their utmost to let their light shine amidst the surrounding darkness, to devise and carry into effect, plans for the diffusion of the pure knowledge of the gospel?

CHAPTER XV.

Missionary Labors in Wales.

In the year 1816 I made my first missionary tour in Wales, and labored incessantly there about ten weeks. I walked across North Wales; but did not preach in that part of the Principality. In South Wales I preached in many places, and generally had large congregations. Mr. B. Phillips, our Welsh missionary, accompanied me to most of the places, where I preached, and when any considerable part of the audience did not understand English, after I had finished my discourse, he gave the substance of it in Welsh. I was received wherever I went with much hospitality and friendship, and was well pleased with the intercourse I had with our Welsh brethren, and with the attention and behavior of the people. After I finished this journey I wrote a letter

to the Welsh Unitarians, which was published in the Christian Reformer. In the year 1819 I made another missionary visit to the Principality, and labored there incessantly about one month. This visit was limited to the eastern parts of South Wales. In the year 1822 I made a short missionary visit to North Wales.

1.

In Cardiganshire I found some well informed and zealous Unitarians. The late Mr. David Jenkin Rees, who had long been a pillar of the cause, was then living. I was informed that this good man learned English that he might be able to read Unitarian books published in that language. He officiated gratuitously as a minister, and was one of the most liberal subscribers towards the support of another minister as his colleague. He was an excellent farmer, and his character stood very high among his neighbors of all parties. Having a large farm he had many servants, to

whom he read and expounded the scriptures, as part of a religious service which he conducted in his own house daily. I spent several days with him, and he conducted me to different places in the neighborhood where I had an opportunity of preaching.

At Pant-y-Defaid, where I found a congregation established in the Unitarian doctrine I preached once. At Capel-y-Graes, another place where a Unitarian congregation assembled regularly, I also preached to a large audience. At Lloyd-Jack, where Unitarian worship was regularly conducted in a large school room, I preached to a numerous assembly. At Lampeter, a market town, I preached in a room at the inn, which was crowded with attentive hearers. At Llandyssil I preached in a school room to a large company. At some of the above places I had many persons of different religious denominations to hear me.

2.

In Pembrokeshire, during my first

journey, I labored more than in any other part of the Principality, because the Unitarian cause had but recently commenced in that county, because I had opportunity of breaking up more new ground there than in any other parts, and because there the English was the only language, at least in those places I visited. At Templeton, a Unitarian chapel had recently been erected; yet the cause was completely in its infancy: and this the only place in the county where Unitarian worship was established. At Templeton I preached nine times, administered the Lord's supper twice, and delivered an address at a public baptism. I visited this place twice in the course of the journey, spent several days there each time, and did all I could to strengthen and establish the infant society. At Narbeth, a market town, I stood in the window of an inn and preached to a multitude of people, the room being filled, and several hundreds standing abroad to hear me.

At Saundersfoot, a village by the sea side, I preached twice in the house of a widow woman, to attentive congregations. At Jeffreston, a village among the collieries, I preached to an attentive audience. At Carew, a village near the head of Milford Haven water I preached in a cottage, which was filled with attentive hearers. In the town of Pembroke, the mayor, who was also minister of the parish, being determined to prevent my preaching abroad, the minister of the tabernacle had the liberality to offer me his pulpit, in which I preached to a large and attentive audience. With this minister I had a good deal of conversation; as I also had with a Calvinist who was a great bigot. At Haverfordwest, a Dissenting minister would have lent me his chapel, if I could have gone in disguise, that is, without letting it be known that I was a preacher of Unitarianism. In this town I preached in a house which had been an inn, to a large congregation, and was told I had

four clergyman to hear me. At Milford I could procure no place to preach in, and the state of society in that town was such as rendered it imprudent to attempt preaching abroad. The same was the case at Tenby; and the mayor there was also the parish priest, and had prevented the crier publishing a meeting in the Methodist chapel.

3.

In Carmarthenshire I found several Unitarian congregations, to whom I preached, as I did in several places where no congregations had been formed. At Panteg I preached in the Unitarian Baptist chapel, and had interesting conversation with some of the people.

At Rhyd-y-Park I preached to a pretty large congregation, and had interesting conversation with several persons. At Felin-Court I preached in a room which was filled with attentive hearers. At St. Clears I preached in Mr. Philip's house to attentive audiences.

In Carmarthen I preached five times in the Unitarian chapel; some of the congregations were crowded, many persons of other denominations came to hear me, as did some of the students at the academy, and one of the tutors. I had edifying intercourse with the friends at Carmarthen. At Kidwelly I preached in the chapel, the minister of which was ranked as an Arian. At Llanelly I preached twice in a room to many attentive hearers. I preached once at Llangyndeirn. At Brecfa I preached to a crowded audience. At Llandilo I preached in a room at one of the inns to a large company; and had conversation and debate with some persons both before and after the service. At Llandyfaen I preached to a very attentive audience. At Landybie I preached in a room to a crowded audience. In most of the above places I had a good deal of conversation with different persons.

4.

In Glamorganshire I preached in a

greater number of places than in any other county in Wales, and to part of this county my second journey was extended. At Gelligron I preached in a farm house to an attentive audience. In Swansea I found a respectable and improving Unitarian congregation. Many of its members, some of them persons of superior rank in society, discovered much zeal in the Unitarian cause. I preached at Swansea four times, most of the congregations were pretty large; and had much pleasant intercourse with the Friends. Some of them were very active in pushing small Unitarian tracts into circulation. At a place near Swansea, called the White Rock, connected with the copper works, I preached in a large school-room, which was occupied as a place of worship by christians of different parties. Here I had a crowded congregation; the most genteel members of the congregation at Swansea attended, and seated themselves on the benches among the working people.

This truly christian conduct did them honor, and tended to promote the Unitarian cause. I preached four times at Neath, in a neat little chapel, which had been recently erected for Unitarian worship: some of the congregations were large. The Unitarians at Neath appeared to have some zeal. At this place I met an interesting character, Mr. Edward Williams, the Welsh bard. Though we had not met before, we knew each other by character, and he now came twenty miles to meet me. He was old, and subject to a complaint which had prevented his being able to sleep in a bed, or to rest in a horizontal posture, for many years. He was a good poet and mineralogist, and possessed a great deal of genius and information. He had no small degree of eccentricity; his feelings were remarkably independent; and he was enthusiastically fond of liberty. He appeared to be universally respected. He traveled with me from place to place about a

week, and I was much entertained by his conversation.

Once I preached at Gellionen. The chapel is situated among the mountains in a wild part of the country. At Wick I preached to a large audience. At Newton-Nottage I preached to a crowded congregation. At Bridgend I preached three times to small attentive audiences. At Bettws I preached to a small congregation. At Cardiff I preached in the Presbyterian chapel to a respectable congregation. In this town I found a few Unitarians; but they seemed too timid to show themselves openly in the Unitarian cause, or to make any exertion to promote it. At Caerphilly I preached twice, once in the town-hall, and once in the market-house, and had many hearers. At Man-mael I preached twice, once in the open air to a large assembly, and once in a farm house to an attentive audience. At Blan-y-gwrach I preached twice to attentive audiences, in a chapel situated on a rural spot, in

the midst of bold and romantic scenery. The last time I preached here, friends being come together from a considerable distance, we spent a great part of the night in conversation. At Newbridge I preached in the market-place to some hundreds of hearers. At Penderyn I preached in a room filled with attentive hearers. At Cymmar I preached to a very attentive audience. At Aberdare I preached four times to large congregations; and had a good deal of conversation and christian intercourse with the members of the congregation.

At Merthyr-Tydfil I spent what time I could, as I considered it one of the most important places in the Principality for the establishment of the Unitarian cause. Its population is at present large, and is likely to continue to increase; being situated in the midst of the iron works, and its inhabitants being engaged in extensive manufacturing and commercial concerns. As is commonly the case in manufacturing and commer-

cial districts, there is at Merthyr-Tydfil more of the spirit of enterprise, of free inquiry and liberality, than in many other places. I found many Unitarians in this town, and many others disposed to attend to and examine the Unitarian doctrine. I preached at Merthyr-Tydfil seven times, not merely to crowded, but to overflowing congregations. The place I preached in the last time I was there being a very long room, the pulpit was removed as near to the door as it well could be, that the people on the outside might hear; still, I was told, that many went away because they could not get near enough to hear. I had much interesting conversation and christian intercourse with the friends: one evening a large party came together for the purpose.

5.

The few places where I preached in Monmouthshire were new ground, places in which Unitarianism had not before been preached. During my first journey

I visited a respectable family at Penmain, and preached in an out building which was fitted up in a temporary way for the occasion. The company I met with at this place was highly interesting, and much edifying conversation took place. From this time the worthy gentleman to whose family I have referred, conducted a public service in his own house once on a Sunday, and allowed any persons who chose to attend. When I visited Penmain again, in the year 1819, the loan of the Independent chapel was obtained, and I delivered four discourses in it to pretty large and attentive audiences. At Tredegar, a populous place among the iron works, I preached in the market-house, and the congregation was estimated at eight hundred people. Afterwards I met a party in a house, and some interesting theological discussion took place. This is quite a populous neighborhood.

In 1819 I visited Newport and preached there four times. There was a good

deal of difficulty in obtaining a place to preach in; at length a large room in the old castle, which was used as a chapel by the Welsh Methodists was obtained, in which I had a large and attentive audience; but the second evening, when I expected preaching in it again, according to a notice previously given, I found it locked against me, and could not obtain admittance; consequently I preached in the castle yard, and had many hearers. When I returned to Newport, after visiting some other places, the landlady of one of the principal inns gave me permission to preach in the inn yard, which I did twice to respectable and attentive audiences, and had several preachers to hear me. At Newport I found several Unitarians, and other persons who thought favorably of the doctrine. Among the new converts who declared themselves while I was there, was a Baptist minister and his wife. This minister had not a regular congregation, but had continued to

preach gratuitously in different places. My exertions in this town occasioned a great stir. I was informed, that one minister gave notice, that, at such a time, he should preach against the heretic who was come down from London. I learned that the Baptist minister and his wife, before mentioned, were cast out of the church of which till that time they had continued members, and he received notice that he was not to preach in a place where it had been previously appointed for him to be. As the friends at Newport were anxious to establish Unitarian worship, I advised them to procure a room to meet in, at as little expence as possible; as soon as should be found practicable, to form a fellowship fund to defray the expences which might be incurred; to begin an Unitarian library; to meet together regularly, and to do what they could to edify one another and establish the cause; and to keep up a correspondence with the friends in Bristol, and to take their ad-

vice respecting all their proceedings. Tracts were sent from Bristol and distributed.

6.

In Breconshire I preached in but two places. In the one of them an Unitarian congregation already existed, in the other Unitarianism was preached occasionally. At Coed-y-Cymmar I preached twice in the Unitarian chapel, to large congregations. At Rhymney, a village among the iron works, I preached in a granary, which the owner emptied for the occasion; it was crowded with attentive hearers. I had a good deal of conversation with persons residing in this village. In this part of Wales hearers followed me from place to place, and Mr. Evans, the minister of the congregation at Aberdare, accompanied me to several places to give a translation of my discourse in Welsh when necessary.

7.

In the year 1822, I made a short

missionary visit in North Wales, and preached at Wrexham, in a room which had been recently opened for Unitarian worship; and I had a good deal of conversation with such friends as I met there. I also preached in a Methodist chapel in a village seven or eight miles from Wrexham, to a pretty large congregation; and visited two Unitarian families in that neighborhood.

8.

From the preceding outline it will be perceived that the seeds of Unitarianism have been widely scattered in South Wales. Much may be done in that part of the country if proper plans be adopted, and steadily pursued, with perseverance. An extensive field is open; but there are many difficulties to conquer, great and continued exertions must be made; union, zeal, and combined exertions are necessary to render the Unitarian cause successful and triumphant. I recommended the publica-

tion of a small periodical work in the Welsh language; this might produce important effects; a missionary should be constantly employed who can preach to the Welsh people in their own language, and tracts liberally circulated in that language.

The hospitality of the Welsh people I had opportunity of proving; I was entertained in the most friendly manner not only by those who had previous information respecting me; but by those who knew nothing of me previously to arriving at their houses. Once the inn where I had intended to lodge being full, I had to look out for accomodation, and was conducted to a farm house among the mountains, where I was received and treated with much hospitality; but I found in the family persons of different religious opinions, and they kept me engaged in controversy till nearly one in the morning. Another time, being deceived as to the distance, and my guide mistaking the way, I was

lost on a mountain; but was received at a lone farm house, and found the most hospitable entertainment.

There is an association in Wales; but it would be well if it could be furnished with pecuniary means of circulating tracts and promoting missionary preaching.

CHAPTER XVI.

Missionary Labors in Cornwall.

As THIS was one of the most distant, so it was one of the most important scenes of my missionary labors. The ground was entirely new. When I first visited Cornwall, there was not a single Unitarian congregation, nor a minister who professed himself a Unitarian, and very few persons who were at all favorable to Unitarianism in that county. I had some time before received a letter from a person at Flushing, near Falmouth, who had become an Unitarian; but had not heard of any one else who was favorable to the cause in which I was engaged; nor did I know a single individual residing west of Plymouth. Methodism had taken deep root and generally prevailed, especially in the mining districts, and had produced important effects on the mass of the people.

They were no longer rude, disorderly and irreligious, as they are reported to have been formerly; but seemed to be generally well disposed, serious, and impressed with the importance of religion. Though Methodism had in some instances produced fanaticism, bigotry and uncharitableness, and been attended with some wild and extravagant circumstances; the good it had done preponderated. Even an Unitarian might preach in the open air, almost anywhere without the least danger of interruption, or the least disorder or disturbance taking place, and would meet with much civility from persons to whom he was a total stranger.

I learned that, formerly, there were ministers, in several places in Cornwall who were Unitarians; but they could hardly be called Unitarian ministers, as the Unitarian doctrine was not made known by their public ministrations. The light which shone in their own minds not being diffused around them,

departed with them; they were succeeded by Calvinists, the darkness of reputed orthodoxy remained, and no trace was left that men of more liberal and rational views had officiated in those places, except in the memory of here and there an individual who had been intimate with them. Far be it from me to question the purity of the motives of the good men of whom I am speaking; but I may be allowed to give my opinion of the plans which they adopted, so far as I have been informed respecting them: and I am fully persuaded, that had they preached the Unitarian doctrine plainly and openly, and used all possible means to communicate the knowledge of it, important effects would have been produced. This no doubt would have exposed them to reproach, and might have required painful sacrifices; but christian ministers ought to be prepared to meet reproach, and to make painful sacrifices in the cause of divine truth, in which their great master suffered so

much, and sacrificed himself: and whatever loss or suffering they may endure, they will find themselves amply rewarded both in this world and in the next.

1.

I first visited Cornwall in the year 1811. The chief object of this journey was to collect information, to ascertain how far future missions among the Cornish people would be likely to prove successful, and what plans would be best calculated to establish the Unitarian cause in that county. I wanted to form an estimate of the general state of the mass of the people, in particular the state of religious opinions and feelings among them, how far they were likely to pay attention to Unitarian preaching, and to find some important station where the Unitarian standard might be erected with success. During the journey I preached in a few places, had many hearers, and succeeded in the objects I had in view to the utmost of my

expectation. Some important effects resulted from my visit at Falmouth and Flushing; in which places I conceived an Unitarian society might before any long time be established. My report to the Fund Committee induced them to send another missionary (Mr. Gishurne) to Cornwall soon after my return; who preached in many places to large congregations; and we had the pleasure of hearing that in Falmouth and its vicinity Unitarianism was gaining ground.

In the year 1815 I again visited, and spent twenty-eight days in Cornwall; when I had Mr. Cooper, a young minister who had just finished his studies, for my assistant in the mission. This was a most laborious journey; but it was attended with considerable success. I preached thirty-seven times, besides engaging in other labors, and in nineteen different places, in most of them in the open air, and frequently to very large congregations; and distributed a great many tracts. The largest congregation

during this journey, was estimated at fifteen or sixteen hundred people. We were frequently engaged in conversation and debate, not only with different persons in the places we visited, but also with others whom we met with on the road in traveling from place to place. After I had completed this journey I addressed a letter to the Unitarians in Cornwall, which was published in the Christian Reformer.

Deeply impressed with the importance of the subject, in my report to the Fund Committee, I recommended all possible attention to the Unitarian cause in this county: and, before I visited it again, Mr. Smethurst, of Moreton Hampstead was sent on a mission thither.

My last missionary journey in Cornwall was performed in the year 1819; when I labored there incessantly about seven weeks; during which time I preached in seventeen different places, delivered fifty discourses, and had a great deal of conversation with different

persons and parties. As usual in this district, in most of the places I had to preach in the open air; the congregations were frequently very large, and generally deeply attentive: the largest congregation was estimated at two thousand people; but I think there were more than that number. I think I did not distribute less than fifteen hundred tracts; they were generally received and even sought after with great avidity. I wrote an address to the Cornish people, of which I had a thousand copies printed, and distributed most of them. This address was also inserted in the Christian Reformer.

2.

The first Unitarian church established in Cornwall, the first fruits of Unitarian missionary labors in that county, is the one at Falmouth When I first visited and preached in that town, I had a good deal of conversation with different persons; several of whom I found candid, and disposed to enquire freely

after truth. The seed then sown took root, sprang up, and brought forth fruit. Several individuals who had been Methodists, became Unitarians, and were excluded from the Methodist Society on account of their opinions: among the rest one who had for some years been a local preacher; who became the Unitarian minister at Falmouth, and has proved a pillar of the cause. At Flushing, a village on the eastern side of the harbor, several persons were also excluded from the Methodist society for becoming Unitarians. These united with the converts to Unitarianism at Falmouth, and formed an Unitarian Society. Their sincerity was soon put to the test; their former brethren who had cast them out, and the other reputed orthodox parties, in the town and its vicinity, not only censured and condemned them, but withheld from them the charities of life, and did many things to injure them in their worldly affairs, imitating the Jews who

would have no dealings with the Samaritans. They were not moved by these things from their steadfastness in what they believed to be the truth, though they suffered loss and had their names cast out as evil. They procured a room for public worship, met together regularly, did what they could to edify one another and promote what they regarded as the truth of God.

In 1815 I found a respectable, though not numerous society of Unitarians at Falmouth. They held their meetings in a large room, which was very inconveniently situated. They retained the best part of Methodism, zeal, a high degree of the devotional spirit, and the habit of attending diligently to public worship, and other religious exercises. During my second journey I preached ten times in Falmouth, nine of them in the usual place of meeting, and once in the market place. I also administered the Lord's supper, and delivered a farewell address. I had many strangers at

different times to hear me, and among the rest two Jews who were said to be men of considerable learning. After my second journey in Cornwall, a Methodist preacher published a pamphlet in opposition to some passages in my book on the Free Grace of God; to which I replied in several letters which were inserted in the Christian Reformer.

The Unitarian congregation at Falmouth, for several years could not obtain a site of land on which to erect a chapel, all parties seeming to combine to prevent their doing it; at length the old theatre was purchased for them, and turned into a commodious chapel.

The consideration of the importance of Falmouth, as the first Unitarian station in Cornwall; of the populousness of the town and its being visited by so many strangers from different parts of the world; of the interesting character of this church, so far removed from all other Unitarian churches; and a persuasion that the spread of Unitarianism in

the whole of the western parts of the county, much depended on giving it a firm footing, and rendering it prosperous in this place; as well as a regard to the truly laudable and persevering exertions the friends themselves had made in its support, determined me to spend a considerable part of the time I had allotted for my last mission in Cornwall there and at Flushing; that I might have full opportunity of strengthening the hands of the brethren, of cherishing the infant cause among them, and of exciting the attention of strangers, and giving full information respecting the Unitarian doctrine, the grounds on which it is believed and professed, and its practical use and efficacy. In pursuance of this determination, I spent seven Sundays at Falmouth and Flushing, preaching in the mornings and evenings at the former; and in the afternoons, excepting that of the first Sunday, at the latter. Then, during the intervening week-days, I made excursions to different places at a

greater or less distance from Falmouth, but directed my attention chiefly to those towns which, I hope, at not a very distant time, will be formed into a circuit, after the plan of the Methodists, of which Falmouth may be the circuit town. With a view to such a future plan I thought it best to regulate my operations. At Falmouth I delivered twenty discourses, and administered the Lord's supper. I had always respectable and closely attentive audiences, sometimes large ones. Many new hearers, first and last, attended; some of them seemed to have become regular attendants, and to be pretty well fixed; as they continued hearers till I left, and some things which they expressed, as reported to me, showed they were in some degree convinced of the truth and value of the Unitarian doctrine. The congregation seemed gradually to increase during the whole time I was there. I had much interesting conversation with the brethren on various the-

ological subjects, and a variety of matters relative to the cause.

3.

At Flushing, a pleasant village on the eastern side of Falmouth harbor, I preached twice the first time I visited Cornwall, and had a good deal of conversation with one person who was then an Unitarian, and some others who were favorably disposed to Unitarianism. When on my second mission in that county, I preached in Flushing six times, sometimes in the open air, sometimes in a large room, and had large congregations, I earnestly recommended the opening of a place in that village for Unitarian worship, and the having a public service regularly conducted there once on a Sunday. When on my last mission in Cornwall, the chapel which had belonged to the Methodists, which they had left for a new one, was hired, and I re-opened it, as an Unitarian chapel. It was from this chapel our

friends in Flushing were some years before expelled for becoming Unitarians; they now re-entered it, and erected the standard of Unitarianism there. During my last journey I preached twelve times in this village, and had much pleasing intercourse with the brethren.

4.

I preached wherever I could find openings in the neighborhood of Falmouth and Flushing. At Penryn, a populous town, two or three miles from Falmouth, I preached five times, in the open air, the congregations were estimated at from five to seven hundred people At Mylor Bridge, about a mile and half from Flushing, I preached in a barn to a small audience At St. Mawes, a borough town, across the water to the south east of Falmouth, I preached twice, on the public quay. The congregation was estimated at five hundred people each time; many of them fishermen. At Port-Shatho, a

small fishing town, about three miles to the east of St. Mawes, I preached once to an attentive audience. At Perranwell, about five miles from Falmouth, I preached twice in the open air to attentive audiences.

5.

In Truro, a large and well built town, I preached three times, at the High Cross, the largest congregation was estimated at fifteen hundred persons. Here I had conversation and debate with a Calvinist, with some Methodists, and with a Jew. The last I found a very liberal man. In Helston, a town about twelve miles west of Falmouth, I preached twice in the public street; the largest congregation was estimated at four hundred people. At Merazion, ten miles further west, I preached in the market-place to a crowded audience. In Penzance, still further west, I preached twice in the green-market; the hearers were estimated at seven or eight hundred people each time. At Newlyn, a fishing

village on the western side of Mount's Bay, I preached to about five hundred people, many of them fishermen, on the sea side. It was a delightful morning, the scenery, including land and sea, was beautiful and grand; the congregation sat on the grass, the scattered rocks and the sand. I preached to them on the parable of the prodigal son. Never did I see a congregation more deeply affected than this was, while I was insisting on the free mercy of God, as the father of his sinful creatures. This scene brought to my recollection how the word of life was first preached by our great Master and the fishermen of Galilee, on the sea side, or in any place where the people were disposed to listen to the glad tidings. At Mousehole, another fishing village on the western side of Mount's Bay, I preached to about two hundred and fifty people, who listened attentively to a discourse on the love of God. At St. Just, I preached on a green, by the side of the town, to several hundreds

of attentive hearers. At St. Ives I preached twice, on the sea side, the congregations each time was estimated at more than a thousand hearers. During the first time I was preaching at St. Ives, it rained while I was in the midst of my discourse, the people did not move, and a sailor, an entire stranger to me, came and held an umbrella over me. At St. Earth I preached to a company of people by the road side. At Redruth, a populous town in the midst of the mining district, I preached four times, in the open air, the largest congregation was estimated at a thousand people. At St. Day I preached near the market place to a pretty large audience. At Cambron I preached in the market-place, to about two hundred people. At Tuckingmill I preached in the street to about an hundred people. At Pool I preached twice, at the front of the principal inn, the largest congregation was estimated at three hundred people. At Chasewater I preached twice, the

first time in the road, to about an hundred people; the second time in a Methodist chapel, which was crowded. At St. Agnes I preached twice in the market place, the first time to about a thousand hearers; the second time, after the notice was given, a heavy rain came on; but some hundreds of people came together, and urged me to preach to them, which I did; some of them held umbrellas over me. At Mevagessy, a large fishing town, on the southern coast, I preached in an open place in the most public street, to at least two thousand people, who seemed to pay great attention. At Leskeard, I preached in a room to an attentive company. In all I preached in twenty-five places.

6.

From the foregoing short review of my labors in Cornwall, it may be perceived, that by preaching, conversation, and the distribution of tracts, the seeds of Unitarianism have been widely scat-

tered in that county. There is a great disposition to attend to the doctrine, and much candor and liberality, in the fishing towns along the Cornish coast. The great thing which is necessary, is to have a missionary constantly employed in Cornwall, in particular in the western part of it: to form a regular circuit, and establish little societies in every place where it is practicable to do it, and to call out suitable persons as local preachers to assist him in the work. To carry such a plan into effect would at first require pecuniary aid from other parts of the country; but in a very few years such a circuit would be able to bear its own expences. *

* I am happy to say, since the above was written, an excellent young minister, whose heart and soul are in the work, and who will regard its success as his best reward, is employed under the direction of the Exeter Unitarian missionary Committee, to act as a Missionary in Cornwall, at least for one year; and it is hoped the success of his labors will be such as to encourage the friends of the cause to secure their continuance. *April 28th*, 1824.

CHAPTER XVII.

Missionary Labors in Devonshire—Somersetshire—Dorsetshire—Hampshire—Berkshire—and Wiltshire.

In the year 1811, I engaged in a mission to the west of England, in which I visited and preached in many places in the above counties, excepting Berkshire, which I visited towards the close of the same year. Throughout the journey the ground was entirely new to me, I had previously no personal acquaintance with the people in the different places I visited. Extemporaneous preaching was quite a new thing in most of those places. I had made up my mind to proceed in every respect in my usual way; as it was the only way in which I was likely to succeed. I was well received wherever I went, and, I believe, my journey promoted the interests of the Unitarian Fund, and was otherwise of service to the Unitarian cause. As the particulars

of this mission were given in the report of the Fund Committee, I shall not repeat them in this place; but merely give a summary of my exertions in the western counties, in a short combined review of my several journeys in those parts. In my journeys to and from Cornwall, in the years 1815 and 1819, I visited and preached in many places in some of the above counties. I also made distinct missionary journeys to some parts of Berkshire, Hampshire, Dorsetshire, and Wiltshire.

1.

I made several visits to Plymouth, preached there two Sundays, and part of a third, and several week day evenings, and had some agreeable intercourse with the people. I preached several times at Dock. The last time I was there a large room was open for a congregation which had made some advances towards Unitarianism. Being introduced to them by my worthy friend Mr. Worsley, the minister at Plymouth,

I delivered several discourses in their room, on some of the leading doctrines of Unitarianism, to crowded audiences; and I hope helped them forward in the way of truth. Whenever I traveled to the west I visited Tavistock. I preached there one Sunday, and several week-day evenings, and had a good deal of interesting conversation with persons belonging to the congregation. I also preached in a village about four miles from Tavistock, where a gentleman with whom I was acquainted had a manufactory; and had many Methodists, and persons of different religious parties to hear me. This gentleman and his numerous family are now settled in the state of Indiana, in America.

At Moreton-Hampstead I preached frequently. In that town there are two Unitarian chapels, the one Baptist, the other Presbyterian: I usually preached in both of them. During my former visits, Mr. Jacob Isaac, the Baptist minister, was living; I soon became inti-

mate with him. He had been one of the earliest advocates of Unitarianism in that part of the country, and was one of the founders of the Western Unitarian Society. When I was last that way my good old friend was dead; but his integrity, piety, firmness in the cause of truth, and exemplary conduct, remained in recollection, and his good name was still like precious ointment, which sendeth forth a sweet smell. Once when preaching in this town I had a Calvinist preacher to hear me, and was told that he said, that if he had cut the throats of half the people in Moreton, he should have done less mischief than my sermon might do. The two chapels are now united under one minister, who officiates in them alternately; and both congregations unite at the Lord's supper. I spent several Sundays at Moreton-Hampstead, as well as preached there repeatedly on week-day evenings. In the summer of 1819 I preached a charity sermon there, and also delivered a

public address in support of a petition in favor of the liberty of the Roman Catholics.

In the course of my journeys in the west, I was frequently at Exeter, and preached several times in that city.* Once after a public service, by request, I gave the audience an account of a missionary tour I had just made in Cornwall. Sometimes I met parties of friends, who came together for conversation with me, at the house of my highly esteemed friend, Dr. Carpenter. I was also introduced to several respectable persons by the Doctor. I once attended the Exeter assembly. When in that city I usually called on the late Mr. Bretland, and had the pleasure of doing so a few days before his death. Though he was then very feeble, the vital spark

* An Unitarian Missionary Society was instituted at Exeter on the 16th of April, 1824, for the counties of Devon and Cornwall. At the formation of which the writer of this work had the pleasure of assisting.—*April 28th* 1824.

burning dimly, and nature rapidly sinking, it was edifying to see the aged servant of the Lord, composed and happy, something of his former intelligence beaming in his eyes, and benevolence irradiating his countenance, and piety and zeal, kindness and affection still warming his heart, even when the icy hand of death began to chill his frame.

I preached once at Totness to a small audience. * Twice I preached at Sidmouth, and had pleasing and edifying intercourse with the late excellent and pious Mr. Butcher; who, though for many years laboring under a painful disease, continued as active in the cause of truth and righteousness as his remaining strength would allow. I several times visited and preached at Honiton; the last time I spent five days in that town, and delivered four discourses;

* I am happy to learn that the Unitarian cause is revived at Totness; and that there is a prospect of a congregation being re-established in that town. *April 28th*, 1824.

during the time I attended the meeting of the Devon and Cornish association, which was held there; and had much pleasant intercourse with the members of the Honiton congregation.

I made two visits to Crediton, and preached there several times, and had pleasant conversation with several persons. I visited Collumpton several times, preached there repeatedly, and had much interesting conversation with different persons. Sometime before I last visited Collumpton, the congregation had sustained a severe loss by the death of a young gentleman, whose virtues and excellencies endeared him to his friends, and rendered him an ornament to his christian profession, and who was likely to prove a pillar to the Unitarian cause. At Tiverton I preached three times.

2

Three times I visited Taunton, preached there two or three times each visit, and had much pleasant intercourse with

my good friend Dr. Davies, and the members of his congregation. At Bridgewater I attended the half-yearly meeting of the ministers of that district, and preached in the evening. At Skipton-Mallet I preached once. I preached at Blackford, and at Wedmoor whilst Mr. Webley was minister at the latter place. Mr. Webley has been talked of as an instance of conversion from Unitarianism to Trinitarianism; but the fact is, he never was an Unitarian; he was only an inquirer on the subject. This I ascertained from the conversation I had with him. He might for some time remain in a state of suspense between Unitarianism and Trinitarianism; but his inquiries issued in the latter. I preached twice at Ilminster, and was met in that town by several ministers, from different places; with whom I had edifying interviews. I also made two visits to Yeovil, preached there several times, and spent some days in christian intercourse. I made several visits to

an Unitarian family at Wellington; but found no opening for preaching in that town.* I once visited Crewkerne; but had no opportunity of preaching there.

I did not visit Bristol till the year 1819, when I spent several days in that city in pleasant intercourse with friends to whom I was introduced by the kindness of the worthy ministers; and one evening I met a respectable party at Dr. Carpenter's, with whose conversation, I was much interested. I preached once at Bristol, and by request delivered a Lecture on the Unitarian Fund, its plans, operations and successes. The same year I attended the meeting of the Western Unitarian Society at Bath.

3.

The first time I visited Bridport I

* Since this was written, Mr. Clarke, of Haslingden, in Lancashire, visited and preached twice in Wellington to good audiences; and it is hoped that, before long, something will be done in the Unitarian cause either in that town or its immediate vicinity.

preached two evenings, and by request, delivered discourses on the unity of God, and the mediation of Jesus Christ, to crowded audiences. Soon after my visit the congregation sent a donation of of forty-five pounds to the Unitarian Fund. The second time I visited Bridport, I preached four times, to large congregations. During both my visits I spent much time in conversation with parties of friends. I never visited a congregation with whose piety, simplicity, zeal, and christian affection I was better pleased. At the time of my visits to Bridport, the late Mr. Howe was the minister; the congregation was blessed in having such a minister, and seemed sensible of his value. If it be happy for a congregation to have such a minister, it is not less happy for a minister to be placed with such a congregation.

Whenever I went into Dorsetshire, I spent some time at Dorchester, and when there always preached, sometimes several discourses. I shall never forget

the pleasure I enjoyed in the society of the late Mr. Fisher and his excellent family. His zeal in the Unitarian cause, associated as it was with ardent piety, active benevolence, and exemplary conduct, did honor to the cause he espoused, and rendered him a blessing to society.

In the course of my first journey to the west, I visited Poole, preached there several times, and had much conversation with the people. About three years after, the congregation being without a minister, I spent a month with them: at that time their affairs were in an unpleasant state; however I preached regularly during my stay, and did what I could to promote their peace and edification. I called again in Poole, and preached there once, in the year 1815. I called several times at Wareham, and had conversation with some persons in that town, and spent some time pleasantly with Mr. Thomas, the minister; but I did not preach there.

4.

Twice I called at Ringwood, was

hospitably entertained, and had a good deal of conversation with a few persons; but could find no opening for preaching in that town.

Twice I visited Southampton, and delivered several discourses in the chapel which has since been given up. It is easy to account for the failure in the attempt to establish Unitarianism at Southampton. The chapel was so expensive in proportion to the means of supporting it, and held on so precarious a tenure; that the failure might from the first have been anticipated. At Rumsey I preached twice in a room, to respectable audiences. I preached at Fareham, in a small place which was opened for Unitarian worship; but afterwards given up.

I visited the Isle of Wight once, and preached two evenings at Newport. I had as much intercourse with the friends as the shortness of my stay would allow, and was gratified with what I saw of them.

Twice I visited Portsmouth, and preached in the Unitarian Baptist chapel; and had a good deal of conversation with different persons.

Some years since a fund was established in Hampshire, for the purpose of extending the Unitarian cause in that district. This deserves imitation in other districts.

5.

It is not necessary to state particularly how Unitarianism was first introduced at Reading, as the reader will find the account of it at large in the Monthly Repository, vol. vii. p. 767. Suffice it to say, that the late Mr. Vidler was the first missionary who went to that town, and that by his preaching and conversation he soon collected a congregation. After Mr. Vidler had spent some time in Reading, the Fund Committee requested me to succeed him there for a few weeks; with this request I complied, though it was in the time of the year that I usually devoted to retire-

ment and study. I made my first journey to Reading in the latter end of December 1811, and stayed there several weeks. During my stay I preached three times on a Sunday, and generally had large congregations. I also delivered a lecture one evening in the week, on some point of doctrine; when, after the lecture, those who attended had liberty to ask me any questions, or make any remarks they thought proper on what they had heard. I had much conversation with the people, and assisted them in forming an Unitarian library. The prospect of success was at this time highly promising.

From this time I frequently visited Reading, and generally spent several weeks there either in the winter or spring of each succeeding year. During one of my visits a Sunday school was established. For several years the cause continued to go on with good prospect of success. The congregation was visited by many ministers, and when without

a minister one of the brethren conducted the service. Those who became Unitarians were hospitable, liberal, friendly and affectionate. I know of no congregation that, in proportion to their number and according to their circumstances, ever made more pecuniary exertion in carrying on the cause; nor have I ever met with more hospitality and kindness than among the Reading friends.

It may be proper to say something respecting the temporary failure of the Unitarian cause at Reading; the reasons of this failure appear to me sufficiently obvious. Of those who espoused it, several were removed by death, and in particular a friend who was best capable and most ready to conduct the public meetings when no minister was there, and who was in every respect one of the most useful and leading persons in the congregation. Some others left the town and went to reside in other parts of the country. The circumstances of some others who remained changed,

and they could not give the cause the support expected. Nor ought it to be concealed, that some who at first seemed warm in the cause became indifferent, and deserted it, and some did not honor it by consistency of conduct. To such things congregations of all parties are liable; but when they befal an infant congregation they are most severely felt. Owing to these things the expence of keeping on the chapel, and providing for a minister, became too heavy for those who remained firm in the cause. After all, I consider the failure of the cause at Reading as merely temporary. Unitarianism is too well understood by many persons, and has taken too deep root in that town to be plucked up. The leaven of that doctrine is too much mixed with the thoughts and feelings of the people to cease to operate. The seed sown is imperishable, it may be buried for a time, but, notwithstanding the chilling blasts, and nipping frosts, in due time it will spring up and grow.

All that is wanted at Reading, in order to the revival of public worship, on Unitarian principles, is a suitable person to take the lead in conducting it. Whenever such a person shall show himself there, open a convenient room, and erect the Unitarian standard, he will find persons to rally round and support him. What I have seen in different places justifies my making these remarks, and encouraging these expectations.

6.

When I made my first journey to the west of England, the Presbyterian chapel at Salisbury was in the occupation of the Methodists; who behaved to me with great liberality. They lighted it up for me to preach in on a week-day evening. This was as I was going west. On my return they gave up the use of it to me for a whole Sunday, and I preached in it three times, and had many of the Methodists to hear me. It is true the chapel was not their own, they had

the loan of it from persons who were Unitarians; but the manner in which they gave place, and accommodated me, showed real liberality.

I once spent a day at Warminster, preached in the evening, and had agreeable intercourse with my friend Mr. Roberts, and some of the members of his congregation.

In the year 1811, I made my first visit to Trowbridge, and was received and entertained in a very hospitable and friendly manner. I preached two evenings to pretty large audiences, and had a good deal of conversation with some of the members of the congregation. I had been written to by them respecting a minister after the death of their former pastor Mr. Daniel Jones.

In the summer of 1819, I visited Trowbridge twice, and spent four days in the town each time. During these visits I preached many times, some of the congregations were very large; and had a good deal of christian intercourse with the people.

In the summer of 1822, in consequence of the melancholy state of Mr. Gisburne, the then minister, and the state in which his affliction placed the congregation, I again visited Trowbridge and stayed about a month, preaching regularly, frequently conversing with the people, and doing all in my power to assist my poor friend Gisburne and his distresed family. I repeated my visit in the latter part of the same summer, stayed a few days, and preached several times.

In October 1822, I removed to Trowbridge, with the view of making it the place of my future residence, having engaged to become the settled minister of the congregation; but my office as a missionary continued to the end of the year 1822.

The Presbyterian chapel at Bradford had for some years either been shut up or lent to the Calvinists. When in Wiltshire, in 1819, I preached in it once. In the summer of 1822, when at Trowbridge,

I obtained permission to re-open it for Unitarian worship, and preached in it several times. Since I came to reside in Trowbridge I have preached in it regularly on a Sunday morning, and hope to continue to do so.

After my removal to Trowbridge, I also opened a room at Hilperton Marsh for a Tuesday evening lecture, which has been pretty well attended.

Around Trowbridge is a pretty wide field for missionary exertions, some part of which, if God grant me life and health, I hope to occupy.

Thus, after having had the whole island for my circuit as a missionary, I have, by increasing years and infirmities been constrained to withdraw into a more contracted sphere. God grant I may be able to occupy that well.

CHAPTER XVIII.

Labors in the Metropolis and its Vicinity.

THE latter part of the preceding chapter anticipated the close of my labors as a perpetual missionary: still what I did in the metropolis and its vicinity remains to be reviewed.

1.

Before I resided in the neighborhood of London, I usually spent a short time there in the course of the year, and sometimes spent a few days there more than once in the course of a year. This gave me opportunity of profiting by the information I received from the respectable persons with whom I associated. I always made a point of attending the annual meetings of the Unitarian Fund, and the General Baptist Assembly, except when engaged in a mission at the time in some very distant part of the country, viz. Scotland or Cornwall.

Those meetings gave me fresh animation and encouragement in the work in which I was engaged; besides, I had then an opportunity of seeing and conversing with persons from different parts of the country, and of gaining information from them which was useful in my subsequent operations as a missionary. While the Academy at Durham House continued, I was admitted to free intercourse with the students, and was sometimes allowed to be present when the business of the Academy was going on, and had opportunity of hearing some of the theological tutor's lectures, from which I derived benefit. I recollect one lecture in particular, which was a summary of the course he had given the students on prayer, which was so well arranged, and so impressive, that the substance of it, though heard but once, was completely fixed in my memory, and it seemed not possible that I should ever forget it. When in town, I had sometimes opportunity of meeting the Fund

Committee, and of profiting by their judicious counsels and suggestions; and also of attending the Hackney conferences, which I found very improving.

I never thought myself much suited to London audiences; nor could I feel the same confidence in my own powers when preaching to a congregation in London or its vicinity, as I felt in other places; and, I apprehend, the same discourses delivered by me in a London pulpit, would appear very different from what they did when I delivered them in the country. I did but seldom feel the same complete ease and entire command of my thoughts and powers when preaching in the metropolis, as I generally felt in other parts of the kingdom. This was not so much the case when I was first in the habit of visiting and preaching in London as it became afterwards: and I think it arose from two causes; first, from an apprehension that my style of preaching was not suited to the taste of many of the hearers there; and se-

condly, from the high opinion I had of the superior talents of some of my brethren in the ministry whom the congregations I had to address were in the habit of hearing. I always felt reluctant to preach to the genteel congregations in London and its vicinity, as may be supposed from what I have already stated; yet I sometimes did it, and was received by them with candor and respect. I preached a few times both at the old and new Gravel Pit chapels: sometimes in the chapel at Parliament Court: delivered the evening lecture a few times at St. Thomas's in the Borough; preached once or twice to the morning congregation in Worship Street: and repeatedly to the afternoon congregation, to which I was once invited to become the minister, but thought it best to decline the invitation. Once I preached at Newington Green: and once I preached a charity sermon in a chapel in Blackman's-fields.

2.

During my visits to London, I once preached at Deptford, and once after I came to reside in the neighborhood of the Metropolis. Once I preached at Brentford. Several times, when in Town I spent the Sunday at Stratford; and preached to a small congregation which had been raised by the exertions of the late Mr. Vidler, and other missionaries; and with the people at Stratford had a good deal of christian intercourse.

3.

In the early part of the year 1816, Mr. Vidler being totally laid aside by the illness which terminated in his death, I supplied his place for six weeks; preaching regularly to the congregation in Parliament Court; and taking the part he should have taken during that time in the Sunday evening lectures at that place, and at St. Thomas's in the Borough, and also in the Wednesday evening lectures in Worship Street.

The lectures had been previously arranged, and I had to deliver lectures on the subjects Mr. Vidler had previously chosen. During this time I had not only a good deal of intercourse with some of the members of the Parliament Court congregation; but also with many other friends in London and its vicinity. These six weeks were part of the time which, according to my arrangements with the Fund Committee, I should have had at my own disposal.

4

From about the middle of October 1819, to the latter end of September 1822, I resided in the vicinity of London; and was employed, during the three intermediate winters, in endeavors to organize a system of local preaching for the neighborhood of the metropolis. I had to look out for places where meetings could be held for Unitarian worship, and find convenient rooms for the purpose; to find persons able and willing to act as local preachers, and,

so far as practicable, train them for the purpose; and to superintend the whole business. This I soon found was an affair of much greater difficulty, in the vicinity of London, than I had anticipated. I labored in it unweariedly, and, I think, did all that any man situated as I was could have done in it; yet it did not succeed to my expectations. Still I trust some good was done, some effects produced which will be permanent: and expensive plans were avoided, which would have diverted the pecuniary means of the Fund from other important objects.

There was a considerable difficulty in finding suitable persons who were willing to act as local preachers. Some who were very well qualified could not be induced to act, or but very rarely. Some, who were ready enough to act, did not appear to be properly qualified. I found two or three who were both able and willing, and who labored as far as they had opportunity, zealously

and gratuitously. During two winters I endeavored to keep up a meeting of the local preachers and the students at Newington Green, for their mutual improvement in conducting public services; but the former were so engaged in business that they could seldom attend, and the meeting was dropped. If it was difficult to find local preachers, it was still more difficult to find places, and procure convenient rooms, where congregations were likely to be collected: nor can this ever be done to any extent in the vicinity of London, until Unitarians who reside in the outskirts, and in the neighboring towns and villages, will either open rooms on their own premises, or exert themselves to procure convenient places for the purpose, and when procured give their countenance by making a point of attending them. Where places were procured, few Unitarians encouraged them by their attendance, though opened in their immediate neighborhood, even when lectures

were preached at a time when there was no public service in the chapels to which they belonged. On the whole, from the experiments made, it appeared to me much more difficult to carry on a system of local preaching with success in the vicinity of the metropolis, than in any other part of the kingdom with which I am acquainted. I am far from taking upon me to censure any one; but I may be allowed to express my ardent wish, that, wherever there are Unitarians in the suburbs or vicinity of London, they would do all they can to make openings for the preaching of Unitarianism, and give all the countenance in their power to the establishment of Unitarian worship in their immediate neighborhood; and that all who are capable of laboring in the work would set their shoulder to it, and do their utmost to promote it. It will be useless for us to deplore the prevalence of ignorance and superstition, if we do not exert ourselves to enlighten and improve mankind.

5.

When I removed to the vicinity of London, a place was open at Woolwich for Unitarian worship. I went thither and preached several Sundays, and procured others to go, so as to keep up a public service regularly. During one winter a course of lectures were delivered which were previously advertised by printed bills which were posted. Every possible means were used; but very few hearers could be collected. At length one family, which made about half the little congregation, left Woolwich, and as the keeping the place open would have been a considerable expence to the Fund, it was thought best to give the matter up.

Finding the little congregation at Stratford had given up the room in which they had held their meetings, thinking it not convenient for the purpose, and not having procured another, had ceased to meet together, I took the earliest opportunity of visiting and con-

versing with them on the matter, and continued to visit and urge them on the business until a room was procured; after which I preached to them many times, and Unitarian worship was again carried on among them regularly. Before I left London they had resolved to purchase a piece of land and erect a small chapel. The revival and firm establishment of the Unitarian cause at Stratford appeared to me to be of considerable importance; on account of its being more than three miles from town, a very populous neighborhood, there being already several Unitarian families there, some of them large ones, and a considerable proportion of young people in the congregation for the size of it. If a chapel be erected, there is little doubt but the congregation will increase.*

* It is with pleasure I have to state, that since the above was written, a chapel has been erected and opened for Unitarian worship at Stratford; by which the Unitarian cause may be considered as established in that populous neighborhood. *April 28th*, 1824.

Unitarian worship had been, for some little time, carried on in a private house in Somers-Town, and I preached there several times on Sunday evenings. The house was inconvenient for the purpose; and at length a large room was procured and fitted up as a chapel in Wood Street, near Grey's-Inn-Lane, in a populous neighborhood, and far from any other Unitarian chapel. In this place, I preached many times, and a course of lectures was delivered on week day evenings by different ministers, who were so good as to give their assistance. In this little chapel a small Unitarian society is formed, a Sunday school and a library established. Though some unforeseen difficulties have attended this infant institution, it is hoped the little society will rise above them,* and that their efforts in so good

* I regret to say, that since writing the above, I have learned, that, owing to new difficulties which have arisen, the place in Wood Street has been given up.

a cause will be crowned with success. The endeavors of its members to edify one another and enlighten their neighbors, is certainly deserving of praise.

A small place was hired for Unitarian worship, in Charles' Street, near the commercial road. In this I preached many times; but it was usually supplied, as were also the places before mentioned, by the local preachers. My plan was to get some one of the local preachers to engage to supply some place, or find others to supply it regularly; in order that there might not be danger of disappointment: and this plan, of putting one place under the more immediate superintendance of one person, at the same time advising as frequent changes among them as could be made convenient, answered very well. It is desirable in such cases to guard carefully against a congregation, however small, being disappointed; at the same time it is equally desirable to have as much variety as possible, especially

where the preachers have but little time to devote to study. After a fair trial, the place in Charles' Street was found not to answer; it was not well situated, and a congregation could not be collected sufficient to render it worth while to keep it on, and it was given up.

In the winter of 1821-22, I was applied to by some persons in the borough, who had formerly belonged to a congregation in Blackman's Fields, which after the death of Mr. Brown, its late minister, was dissolved, for my advice and assistance in procuring a place for Unitarian worship in that neighborhood. I met them several times, and assisted them in forming a committee, and in making certain arrangements respecting the proposed object. Their first proposal was to engage a convenient room in the outskirts of the borough; but they at length engaged an eligible one not far from London Bridge. I secured preachers for them, to conduct the morning service, during the first few

months; and a respectable minister in London gave them his services for several months on the Sunday evening. I preached to them a few times, and before I left London, the appearances were such as authorized the conclusion that a congregation would be permanently established.

The foregoing is an outline of what was done in respect to the proposed plan which occasioned my removal from the country to the neighborhood of the metropolis. Had this plan fully succeeded to my wishes, I should have regretted my removal again into the country, and possibly it might not have taken place; but I had no prospect of being as useful near town as I thought I could be in a country situation; and not feeling capable of long continuing those extended plans which I had engaged in the greater part of the year, my only chance of continued usefulness was the fixing as a minister in some country town.

6.

My residence near London gave me opportunity of sometimes enjoying the society of highly respected friends whom a country residence will allow me to see but very seldom. Aside from this I had no predilection for the metropolis as a place of residence; but altogether preferred the country.

While residing in the vicinity of town, I took a part in the lectures, at St. Thomas's, duriug the two winters they continued. I also regularly attended the conferences, at Hackney, and occasionally preached for different ministers. Indeed, one way or other, I was as fully employed during those three winters, as I had been during any preceding ones; and I found much less time for study and writing then I had when residing in the country.

I can never be forgetful of the kind attention of my friends in ondon, and its vicinity, and the pleasure I have enjoyed in their society; the opportunity

I sometimes had, though not so often as I wished, of hearing my brethren conduct public services, was truly edifying and refreshing to me; the loss of this I cannot help regretting. To hear of the prosperity of our churches in the metropolis, and the success of the plans conducted by our brethren there for the promotion of the Unitarian cause will ever give me high satisfaction.

CHAPTER XIX.

Results of my observation and experience as an Unitarian Missionary.

After having acted as a missionary for nearly twenty years, and in many different parts of the kingdom, it may be supposed, that the observations which I have had opportunity of making during so long a time, and in so many different places, and the experience which I have had of the effects produced by the plans on which I have acted, may authorize my making some well founded conclusions, which it will not be unimportant to communicate to the Unitarian public. This I intend doing, in as few words as possible, in the present chapter.

1.

The correctness of the opinion which I formed in the outset, that Unitarianism is a religion suited to the poor and unlearned, has been abundantly verified in

the course of my missionary life, and each succeeding year has added much to the evidence of its truth, until it is become a well established fact: so well established, that none who are acquainted with the present state of Unitarianism can scarcely have the hardihood to deny it. The success of Unitarianism during the last twenty years has been chiefly among the common people. Many new congregations have been formed, the bulk of whose members are unlearned and working people. Such persons, when instructed in the Unitarian doctrine, I have found among the most active and efficient promoters of it. Mr. D. Eaton's narrative of the York Baptists, and Mr. J. Ashworth's account of the Methodist Unitarians in a part of Lancashire, may be referred to, among many other documents, as furnishing proof of what I have just stated. The frequent applications made to the Unitarian public, for pecuniary aid towards the erection of chapels, by new

congregations, consisting chiefly of poor people, of which there are recent instances, furnish unequivocal proof of the progress which Unitarianism is making among the mass of the people. Dr. Marsh, the present learned bishop of Peterborough, showed his penetration, and paid, whether undesignedly or not, a high compliment to Unitarianism, when he suggested that if the children of the mass of the people, were educated on Mr. Lancaster's plan, and had the naked bible put into their hands, on the plan of the bible societies, they would become Unitarians. From my observation and experience, I am inclined to think this opinion of his lordship will be found correct.

2.

After what has been done, the efficacy of missionary plans cannot well be doubted. They have been the means of diffusing the knowledge of the Unitarian doctrine in many parts of the kingdom where it could not have been

communicated in the same time by any other means. Missionaries have not only extended Unitarianism to many parts of the country where it was before unknown, by their preaching, and carried the light of it by their conversation into the humble dwellings of the poor and illiterate; they have drawn the attention of many persons to it in places where Unitarian chapels existed, who were not likely to have their attention excited by regular ministers, aud who had not previously entered any Unitarian place of worship: while they have circulated Unitarian tracts extensively, by their preaching and conversation they have awakened the attention of the people to their contents. As christianity was first propagated by missionaries, so the revival of genuine christianity has been promoted by the labors of those, who, not waiting for the people to come to them, have gone to the people, "into the streets and lanes of the city," "into the high ways and hedges," "to compel

them to come in," and be partakers of the gospel feast. By such labors new congregations have been collected, in places to which fixed ministers could not have extended their exertions; and some old congregations have had the cause revived among them. To me it appears important, that the country should be divided into districts, of greater or less extent, as circumstances may render most eligible, and a missionary be appointed to each district, to act under the countenance and with the advice of a committee, to be formed for the purpose in each district; the district committees to keep up regular correspondence with the Unitarian Fund committee in London. It appears to me, from all the experience I have had, and all the observation I have been capable of making, that such a plan, gradually carried into effect, as it may be found practicable, would in a few years spread Unitarianism over the whole country. It is in this way, methodism has been so

widely and successfully propagated and established. It would not at all interfere with any existing plan or institution; the old congregations, having their regular ministers, would go on as usual. The pecuniary means requisite might as easily be raised among Unitarians as they are among Methodists, especially as there are many congregations already established, which could and would give their assistance until the plan was capable of supporting itself. There are several parts of the country where such circuits, or missionary districts, might be formed immediately. It would be absolutely necessary to employ what are called lay preachers, as missionaries and they must be men who can labor hard, live on little, who would not regard inconveniencies and privations, whose heart and soul would be in the work. In arranging such a plan many valuable ideas might be borrowed from the Methodists.

3. As among the Methodists and some

other religious denominations, so among Unitarians it is essentially necessary that persons who have not been educated for the ministry, and who might not be thought proper to be regularly engaged in it, who have to attend to business, or some secular employment, but who are capable of instructing others, should be excited and encouraged to act as local or occasional preachers. They may not be qualified to preach to our regular congregations, or in large towns, yet they may be useful in villages, and obscure places, and may preach with success to the less informed parts of society: by being brought to exercise their talents they may improve and increase them, so as in time to become acceptable ministers in some of our regular congregations. The local preachers are the main strength of the methodist connection, and the cause of methodism could not be carried on to its present extent, nor any thing like it, without them. So far as persons have

been brought to act as local preachers among Unitarians, good has been done, they have been instrumental in collecting some new congregations, and have supplied some places which could not otherwise have been supplied. It seems not possible for those ministers who are fixed with congregations to do all that is necessary, and which might be done in the Unitarian cause; on Sundays they are engaged in their own chapels, and, of course, local preachers must then supply small congregations who have no fixed ministers, and go to such places as may present openings for Unitarian preaching. If the plan of forming circuits, or missionary districts, be adopted, it will be necessary to have local preachers to act in connection with the missionary, and to second his efforts. Though it is necessary, and of great importance that a learned ministry should be kept up among us, and that ministers should be enabled to devote themselves to study and the work of the ministry; it by no

means follows that it is necessary that all ministers should be men of learning; if they possess good natural talents, be well acquainted with the scriptures, and be truly pious and benevolent, there are many situations in which they may be highly acceptable and useful ministers without human learning. All my observation and experience lead me to the conclusion, that district missionaries and local preachers are of the utmost importance to the Unitarian cause; without both these I see not how it can be generally extended and rendered successful throughout the country.

4.

What has actually taken place fully convinces me, that if Unitarianism be preached as the doctrine of the gospel, in a plain and popular style, in a lively and zealous manner, it will be successful. But it must be so preached to the mass of the people that they can understand and feel it, or they cannot be expected

to embrace it. It must be shewn to be what Jesus and his apostles preached. It is not refined and philosophical reasoning which will reach their understandings and hearts; but the plain gospel, stated in a warm and affectionate manner; the proofs which will have weight with them must be derived from scripture, and conviction can be produced in their minds only by urging the plain facts and positive declarations of scripture. Unitarianism must be preached to them as a vital and practical religion, which comes home to the heart, and contains a provision for all their moral and spiritual wants. That style of preaching is best which is best suited to the people addressed; the extemporaneous mode will be found to suit the mass of the people best; and a direct address to them will excite their attention more, and make a deeper impression, than the most elegant composition which is not directly addressed to them. Whatever is delivered in a style which

is not suited to their capacity and attainments, which is not calculated to reach their hearts, will be lost upon them. With the poor and unlearned, a familiar, impressive and solemn mode of address will generally prove effective. It will be found best to begin with those subjects which relate to the moral character and government of God, and his infinite love and mercy in Jesus Christ. No system is more rich in topics calculated to affect the heart and interest all the feelings than that of Unitarians; and if we bring them out in a proper manner we shall gain the attention of the hearers, and, whilst we enlighten their understandings win their affections; and they will be convinced that Unitarianism is not the frigid zone of christianity.

The experiment of Unitarian missions and popular modes of making known the Unitarian doctrine, has been made for a sufficient length of time, and on a scale sufficiently extensive, as I trust the preceding work shows, to produce

decisive results; and I hope it will not be thought arrogant for me to state what those results are, to point out the conclusions which seem to me to be fully authorized by long continued observation and experience.

5.

It appears to me that Unitarian christianity alone can save multitudes of people, even of the unlearned and working classes, from going from reputed orthodoxy to mere deism. The general diffusion of education, so far as relates to reading and writing; the political discussions, which have been widely extended; and the variety of tracts, of one kind or another, which have been widely scattered every where; have opened the minds of the people to free inquiry, in a degree before unknown. Favorable as this is to the interest of truth, if proper means of information, on theological subjects, be not afforded the mass of the people, many of them

will go, as indeed many of them have already gone, from misnamed orthodoxy to mere deism. The popular notions of christianity cannot satisfy men who inquire and think freely; and if they be left to indentify those notions with the scriptures, their rejection of the scriptures will be the unavoidable consequence. This I have found to be the case in numerous instances. That Unitarianism is an adequate remedy for this evil I have also had proof in many instances; I have the happiness to know, that many persons have been recovered from Deism, and many others saved from falling into it, by being brought to the knowledge of Unitarian christianity. I have talked with individuals who had for years been lost from the ranks of christians, who, after free and candid conversation, acknowledged that had they in the former part of their lives been acquainted with Unitarianism that would not have been the case. By others I have been told, that had they

not become acquainted with Unitarianism they should have become Unbelievers.

It is Unitarianism must save those who are hurried by the disgusting doctrines of reputed orthodoxy, and the illiberality and uncharitableness of its professors, to the gulph of infidelity. A sense of the value of christianity should lead us to do all we can to free it from the corruptions which conceal its beauty and veil its glory, and counteract its holy and happy influence in the world, and increase our zeal for the spread of its pure doctrines, its heavenly temper, and the practice of its divine precepts.

6.

Another conclusion to which my observation and experience, have brought me, is that Unitarianism is the effectual remedy for uncharitableness. It is not one of the least evils of reputed orthodoxy, that it is so generally a source of uncharitableness, that it restrains the

flow of the milk of human kindness in its votaries, and sometimes interrupts the civilities of life towards misnamed heretics. There are, no doubt, truly liberal men who maintain the reputed orthodox system; but they are persons who rise above the influence of their creed, and are the more particularly noticed because the association of liberality and charity with the doctrines they profess is not common, nor thought, from its being unusual, quite natural. An uncharitable man may now and then be found among Unitarians; but it is not common, nor when found there does he feel at home, he seems to have mistaken his company; and the few instances I have known of Unitarians being illiberal have been of short continuance, they have generally, before they had been Unitarians any long time, become liberal and charitable. With joy have I witnessed the change which Unitarianism has made in opening the mind to free inquiry, in making the

narrow hearted, party spirited man liberal, in rooting out uncharitableness, and causing good will and kindness to flow to all men of all parties and creeds.

7.

I have found by experience that success in the Unitarian cause is not to be attained without steady perseverance. In most places the most determined opposition is to be expected. No sooner is the Unitarian doctrine introduced, than all other parties are alarmed, their prejudices are roused, and every method is taken to prevent attention to an Unitarian preacher, to any tracts that he may circulate, or any thing that may be said in favor of Unitarianism. Generally there will be a great deal of misrepresentation; and every mode of alarming the feelings of the neighborhood, as to the erroneousness, and the pernicious and destructive tendency of the doctrine, will be employed to prevent Unitarianism gaining any firm footing.

It must be a work of time, sometimes of several years, and will require much steady exertion and persevering labor to conquer the prejudices of a neighborhood, and gain the attention of the public so far as to obtain for Unitarianism the prospect of prosperity. If we expect to do much by a single effort, or in a very short time, it is likely we shall be disappointed. We must prepare ourselves to work incessantly, and in every possible way in the cause; to be instant in season and out of season, to labor and not faint; and be content to wait as the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth. Often have I been rejoiced, after the lapse of years, when I have visited the same parts of the country again which I had visited before, to find the fruits of former labors which I had not expected. I have seen the words of scripture verified; "In due time we shall reap if we faint not."

8.

Compared with what they were twenty

years ago, the prospects of the friends of Unitarianism are bright and highly encouraging; much has been done during that time, and many new circumstances have arisen altogether favorable to the Unitarian cause: still abundantly more remains to do; the utmost united and unwearied exertion is necessary, and there is every thing to influence to such exertion. If with less strength, in far less favorable circumstances, and under greater difficulties, so much was done, so much success obtained, what may we not hope to effect, if we avail ourselves of all our present advantages, use our increased and increasing strength to the utmost, now that our difficulties are greatly diminished? I have to lament that I cannot make the exertions which I formerly made, that age and infirmities prevent me; yet I greatly rejoice, that, after having in some measure borne the heat and burden of the day, I live to see others raised up who are both able and willing to go on with

the great work, and whose labors are likely to be attended with more abundant success. It will be the solace and rejoicing of the evening of my life, so long as it shall please God to continue me here, to see the growing success of the Unitarian cause, and to aid it so far as any strength and ability remain.

CHAPTER XX.

Miscellaneous Remarks.

SOME few things remain to be noticed, which could not so well be brought into any of the preceding chapters: consequently they are added here.

1.

Whilst the Academy at Durham-house continued, I sometimes had one of the students with me on a missionary journey, for a few weeks during the summer. Mr. Cooper, who is now the minister at Newcastle-under Lyne, and at Hanley in the Potteries, in Staffordshire, during one of the recesses at the Academy, traveled with me several weeks in Kent and Sussex; and when he had finished at the Academy he went a missionary journey with me, which employed us three months; we commenced it in the Weald of Kent and extended it to the Land's end. That most excellent young

man, the late Mr. Benjamin Goodier, was with me several weeks on a missionary journey in Kent and Sussex. Mr. Meek, who is now the minister at Stockton-upon-Tees, accompanied me on a mission to Wales, and spent several weeks with me there. Mr. Frederic Horsfield, who is now the minister at Cirencester, went with me on a mission to the west of Yorkshire and part of Lancashire; and was with me three months. The company of these worthy young men made traveling more pleasant than it would otherwise have been, and they assisted me in the work. On Sundays, and sometimes on week-days, when circumstances rendered it practicable, we separated, and were employed in different places. Whilst they were assistants to me, I considered one object of their traveling with me to be their own improvement, and this I endeavored to promote as far as I was able. I studied to train them to habits of popular usefulness in conversation and preach-

ing; punctuality in their engagements, to walk well, endure much labor, and travel on the most economical plan.

2.

In Cornwall, Wales, or Scotland, when I had no person traveling with me, frequently some friend, or friends, would accompany me from place to place; but often I had to travel by myself on roads where I had not been before, and to places where I had no previous acquaintance. It is highly desirable when a missionary goes on entirely new ground that he should have some companion with him to assist him. To walk alone over parts of the country where he is a stranger is very dreary; yet in this manner I have gone over a considerable part of the country: to enter a town where he knows no one, and has no introduction to any one; and, after a walk of many miles, to have to look out a place to preach in, have a notice circulated, preach to a congregation of strangers,

and try to obtain conversation with some of the hearers, requires not only good health and spirits, but much fortitude, resolution and presence of mind. The great difficulty of a missionary getting through the whole business properly, when he has every thing to do by himself alone, I have felt; to have a friend with him who is able to advise and assist him is a great advantage. The wisdom of our Lord's conduct, when he sent forth his disciples two and two, cannot be questioned: and appears to be worthy of imitation when missionaries are sent out, especially when sent to places where they have no friends to receive them. If I be rightly informed, when any public friend among the Quakers goes on a mission, he is not left to travel alone, but has some proper person to accompany him. I wish to recommend the same plan to the Unitarians; I mean when a missionary has to break up new ground, or to travel in parts of the country where he is a stranger, and

has no friends to receive and assist him. No doubt it would be attended with more expence than for a missionary to travel alone; but he would generally be able to do more; and surely regard should be paid to the ease and comfort of the missionary; his exertions both of body and mind, and the great difficulties he has to conquer, should be diminished as much as the nature of the work in which he is engaged will allow; and in some cases his health and the continuance of his labors will depend on this being done. It will be no small exertion for him to walk ten or twenty miles in a day, preach every night, and conduct conversation or conference afterwards, even should he have a friend with him to attend to other matters. What I have felt leads me to speak the more pointedly upon this subject.

3.

In several extensive districts in England little or nothing has yet been done in the Unitarian cause: and it

would be attended with great expence, and with no great prospect of success, for missionaries to labor much in such districts, until the way be prepared for them; by information being obtained respecting different places, and some individuals can be found to receive and give them countenance. It is highly probable that in such parts of the country there are persons favorable to Unitarianism, though we know nothing of them. If they would make themselves known and communicate what information they can, to the secretary, or any of the members of the committee of the Unitarian Fund, this would help to prepare the way for missionaries to be sent to such parts. Wherever there are any Unitarians, if they would show themselves openly, and make it known that they would give their countenance and assistance to missionaries, this would be an encouragement for them to visit the places where such persons reside. If Unitarians who travel either

on matters of business or for pleasure, would make it a point to take Unitarian tracts with them, and distribute them in parts of the country where Unitarianism is not known, and would give themselves the trouble of collecting what information they can that would be useful to missionaries, and communicate it to the secretary of the Unitarian Fund this also would help to prepare the way for the extention of missionary labors to the districts I am speaking of. Until in some way or other, such information can be obtained, and such previous steps taken, as would give some rational prospect of success, it would not, in the present state of the Fund, be the most wise plan to divert its means from parts of the country where success is morally certain, to make experiments in other parts where there is nothing like the same certainty of success, at least any otherwise than as a remote object. I shall not be understood to despair of success to the

Unitarian cause in any district in the kingdom; or as wishing to discourage missionary exertions any where; all I mean is, that as we cannot go beyond our means, they should be employed in such directions as promise the most success, at the least expence to the Fund: and what I particularly aim at is, to stir up all the friends of the cause to exert themselves to the utmost, to open and prepare the way for missionaries to labor with success in those parts of the country where they have not yet been. The cause in which we are engaged is a glorious one, the work of extending it to all parts of the country is great; every one should do what he can to promote and carry it on, by supporting the Fund, exciting the attention of the public to the Unitarian doctrine, diffusing the knowledge of it, and promoting the success of those who promulgate it.

4.

The establishing the Unitarian cause

in single places, at any considerable distance from Unitarian congregations who can assist, either by the occasional labors of their ministers, or by some of the members of such congregations attending to such places as local preachers, will be attended with much expence, unless a particular plan be adopted. To attempt at once to have a chapel and a regular supply of ministers, in such detached situations, will either greatly burden the Fund and diminish its exertions in other directions, or involve an infant society in such pecuniary difficulties as will much injure, if not cripple, the cause: of this we have had some instances. My advice has ever been, that newly formed congregations should rigidly adhere to the most economical plans, carefully avoid contracting debts, and avoid as much as possible drawing on the pockets of the hearers. The desire of having a respectable house to meet in, and regular ministers to officiate, however laudable, should be rather

checked than encouraged in places where the pecuniary means are inadequate to the expence which such a plan would involve. The only practicable way in such cases which is likely to be crowned with success, is to procure any convenient room to meet in, for the people to assemble together regularly and proceed in the best manner they can, and procure the assistance of regular ministers occasionally: this plan has succeeded wherever it has been adopted, and followed up steadily and with persevering zeal. Some congregations which now have chapels and fixed ministers, began and went on in this manner for several years. Attempts should not be made to induce new converts to pledge themselves to pecuniary exertions, till they have had time to count the cost and to act deliberately in the matter; lest in the first glow of zeal they should engage to do what they may afterwards feel to be a burden; which would be likely to damp their zeal, if it did not tempt them

to desert the cause. The fondness of display, of making what is called a good appearance in the eyes of the world, what an apostle would, perhaps, call a fair show in the flesh, which is too common among many religious parties, ought to be guarded against, or it will lead to pecuniary inconveniences, as well as to what is inconsistent with the simplicity of the gospel. As every thing cannot be done, nor well attempted, at once, it is important to consider how, with the pecuniary and other means actually possessed, the most can be done to extend the Unitarian cause. To me it appears, that constant attention should be paid to the breaking up of new ground in those districts where Unitarian congregations are already established, and in parts of the country contiguous to such districts; because in such places it can be done at less expence and with greater certainty of success. In such parts of the country a missionary will have the countenance and assistance of

the ministers and members of the neighboring congregations, they will find openings for him to preach, give him useful information respecting places and persons, sometimes accompany him to new places, strengthen and encourage him in the work, and afterwards pay some attention to the new ground which he may break up, and, by watering the seed which he sows, render the success of his labors the more certain. If congregations be not formed in all the places which he visits, some persons may be so far impressed by his preaching as to become members of congregations already established at a few miles distance from their places of residence. We should imitate the new settlers in a foreign country, who fix on those spots which can be brought into cultivation with the least labor and expence, from which they gradually extend their plantations till a whole district is brought in, and a wilderness is turned into a fruitful field.

5.

Never, perhaps was any public Institution blessed for so many years, with a constant succession of such judicious, able, and efficient committees and public officers, as the Unitarian Fund. They have been unwearied in their labors, their plans have been laid with thegreatest deliberation and judgement, all their measures adopted and carried on with prudence and energy; and the success which has crowned their exertions sufficiently evince their ability and efficiency. They are well entitled to the confidence of the Unitarian public, which nothing but the most judicious and effective proceedings could have gainedin so high a degree and to so wide an extent, considering the circumstances in which they commenced their labors, and the numerous difficulties they have had to surmount. This work is only an outline of what their plans and operations have effected by one of their agents; what other missionaries

have done under their direction it is not my business to state; but some account of it will be found in the abstracts of the reports of the committees which have been published. Besides, they have given assistance to a number of churches which needed their aid: and their exertions to establish a communication with foreign countries, and to promote the Unitarian cause in distant parts of the world, are deserving the attention and thanks of the Unitarian public. They would have done much more had the means of doing it been in in their power. Plans have been submitted to them, or have been devised by their liberal counsels, which they have not the pecuniary means of carrying into effect. The plan of forming missionary circuits, mentioned in the preceding chapter, for which the way is pretty well prepared, and which I think of great importance, cannot be carried into effect without an increase of pecuniary means. The Unitarian public

can furnish the means necessary; the doing it I would urge upon them by all the regard they feel for the spread of pure and genuine christianity, and for the improvement and happiness of mankind. Would it be too much to request that every fellowship fund should send a small part of their proceeds annually to the Unitarian Fund, for the promotion of this object? Other denominations of christians have their annual sermons and public collections, for their missionary societies; why should not the same plan be adopted by Unitarians? If in two hundred of our congregations an annual sermon was preached in aid of the Unitarian Fund, to enable the committee to establish missionary circuits, and the collection in each congregation, on an average, amounted to only five pounds, which surely is not too high an estimate, this, in addition to what the Fellowship Funds might do, added to the present resources of the Unitarian Fund, would enable the com-

mittee to carry into effect plans of the most essential importance to the Unitarian cause, and the public. I take the liberty of suggesting these things, I think they are not unreasonable, nor do I see how they would burden either any individual or congregation. Public collections would give opportunity to persons, who are not capable of subcribing in any other way, of casting their mite into the treasury, which would gratify their feelings, and might help to increase their zeal; and the preaching of annual sermons would be likely to attract the attention of strangers, make Unitarianism more known, promote the cause in the places where preached, and some part of the money collected would be given by the strangers who attended on the occasion.

6.

I cannot lay down my pen without congratulating the friends of Unitarianism on the progress which the cause has

already made, and on their present encouraging prospects. Already the tents of reputed orthodoxy tremble, mystical Babylon is shaken to the very foundation, alarm and terror spread through the camp of the enemy, and whilst affecting to despise the exertions of Unitarians, and crying, the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are we, their opposition to free inquiry betrays their want of confidence in their own system, and, though they wish to be thought the only enlightened, their only refuge is mystery and darkness; but this refuge cannot long remain amidst the increasing light of the pure gospel, which is breaking through the clouds of error and superstition, and dispelling the shadows of the long night of ignorance and priestly domination. I bless my God, that he hath preserved me to see the dawn of a glorious day, and hath enabled me to devote the prime of my life to the cause of Unitarian christianity. If I, in some de-

gree, retire from the field while the conflict betwen rationality and mystery, truth and error, the pure gospel and creeds of human device, christian liberty and superstitious prostration and boudage, still continues, it is in the full confidence that the victory and complete triumph are certain; and if the enemies of Unitarianism approach my quarters, they shall find me in my armor, and still ready for the contest; the sword of the spirit shall not fall from my hand while I have strength to wield it: and when the hour which is rapidly approaching shall arrive, that my hand can no longer move, nor my voice articulate, if thought remain, be this my prayer, "Let Jehovah be King over all the earth; the one Jehovah whose name is one." Hallelujah: "The Lord God Omnipotent reigneth."

ADDENDA.

Note to Chapter X. 7. *page* 290.

SINCE what relates to Edinburgh was written, an Unitarian Chapel has been erected and opened in that city. I feel much pleasure in having this fact to record.

Note to Chapter XIV. 5. *page* 362.

Since this work was in the press, a Chapel has been opened at Hanley, and I have revisited my friends in that town and its vicinity, and was afresh gratified with their steady and persevering zeal in the cause. A debt remains on the Chapel, and I cannot refrain from earnestly recommending the Hanley cause to the patronage of the Unitarian public. It is of great importance to the cause that the Hanley congregation should be assisted in a pecuniary way till the debt on their chapel be completely discharged.

Note to Chapter XVII. 6. *page* 421.

Since this work was sent to press, the room at Hilperton-Marsh has been given up; on account of the few people that attended.

CONTENTS.

PREFACE..... p. 7
INTRODUCTION..... 12
CHAPTER I. A Review of the circumstances which prepared the author for the work, and led to his becoming a Missionary..... 17
1. Natural constitution, and susceptibility of particular impressions
2. Discipline in early life
3. Early religious impressions
4. Becomes a Calvinist
5. Gives up Calvinism
6. Progress to Unitarianism
7. Reflections after he became an Unitarian
8. Considerations which satisfied him that Unitarianism was capable of being the religion of the poor and unlearned
9. Hopes of success then formed since realized

CHAPTER II. Introduction of Unitarianism in the north-east district. Missionary labors prior to the establishment of the Unitarian Fund 37
1. Situation of the Author on his first settlement in Wisbeach
2. The congregation in that Town converted to Unitarianism
3. Exertions at Lutton. The congregation there becomes Unitarian

4. Intercourse with the Arminian Baptists
5. Illiberal conduct of the reputed Orthodox
6. Commencement and progress of his acquaintance with the late Mr. Vidler
7. Origin and establishment of the Unitarian congregation at Boston
8. The Author visits Lincoln, and some other places: an Unitarian congregation established at Lincoln
9. Labors in the North Marshes
10. Journeys in parts of Sussex and Kent
11. Journeys to Thorne in Yorkshire; Unitarianism planted there
12. He visits Hull and preaches there

CHAPTER III. The Unitarian Fund instituted.—Review of the Author's connexion with that Institution..... 83

1. How the Fund originated and was established
2. Particulars of the Author's connection with the Fund
3. His removal to the vicinity of London
4. A mission to America projected.
5. An expression of his obligations to the Fund, its managers and supporters
6. Reasons for withdrawing from the office of a perpetual missionary

CHAPTER IV. A Review of the Missionary's general mode of proceeding, and rules which he found it necessary to observe..... 125

1. He should count the cost before he engages in the work
2. His mind should be furnished and prepared for the work
3. Should be always ready to preach
4. Be careful to choose proper subjects
5. The style should be suited to the hearers

6. Preaching in the open air, and other places
7. A Missionary must avoid having any thing to do with differences in congregations
8. Modes of making the preaching known
9. Much to be done besides preaching
10. Tracts should be distributed
11. A Missionary must endure much hardship
12. He must be punctual to his engagements.
13. He must devote himself entirely to the work
14. He should cultivate an habitual sense of the presence of God

CHAPTER V. Proceedings in the North-east district and parts adjoining, after the institution of the Unitarian Fund..... 163

1. Spalding, Wainfleet, Alford, Burgh, Orby, Louth, Grimsby, North Marshes, Billingay, Walcot, Horncastle, Conningsby, Brigg, Kirton, Gainsbro', Epworth, and several other places
2. The Western parts of Norfolk: an Unitarian Congregation formed at Lynn
3. Soham, and other places in Cambridgeshire
4. An Association formed
5. Amount of success before I left the district

CHAPTER VI. Further account of labors at Thorne and in its neighborhood, Hull, York, Selby 185

1. Difficulties at Thorne:—preaching in several other places in its vicinity
2. Progress of the cause:—Unitarianism planted at Stainforth
3. Chapels erected at Thorne and Stainforth, and a minister fixed in those places
4. Intercourse with the Unitarians in Hull
5. York, Cawood, Doncaster
6. Exertions at Selby
7. Remarks

CHAPTER. VII. Missionary labors in the West of Yorkshire..... 205

1 Sheffield, Rotherham
2. Missionary tour planned by the late Dr. Thompson
3. Stannington, Huddersfield
4. Browbridge, Elland, Jaggergreen, Lindley, Brighouse, Salter-Hebble, Ovenden, Mirfield, Dewsbury
5. Lydiate, Honley, Crossland
6. Halifax, Bradford, Leeds, Wakefield
7. Remarks

CHAPTER VIII. Labors in Kent, Sussex, and Surry..... 229

1. The Old General Baptists
2. Dover, Canterbury, Sturrey, Deal, Broadstairs, Ramsgate, Maidstone, Chatham, Rochester, Sheerness
3. Bessell's-green, Seven-oaks, Old Baptist churches
4. Rolvenden, Tenterden, Cranbrook, Headcorn, Smarden, Biddenden.
5. Battle, Northiam
6. An Unitarian Association, in Kent, and the east of Sussex. A Missionary appointed for the district
7. Lewes, Brighton, Ditchling, Cuckfield, Crawley
8. Horsham, Billingshurst, Chichester
9. Meadrow near Godalming, Worplesdon, Wanborough, Guilford
10. Remarks respecting the Old General Baptists

CHAPTER IX. Missionary labors in Essex, Suffolk, and the Eastern parts of Norfolk

1. Saffron Walden
2. Colchester

3. Ipswich, Woodbridge, Grundisburgh
4. Framlingham, Diss, Bury St. Edmund's
5. Norwich, Yarmouth, Hapton, Foncett
6. Remarks

CHAPTER X. Missionary labors in Scotland 262
1. Summary View
2. Preparatory step.—Remarks on the Scotch people
3. State of things when the Missonary first went to that country
4. Glasgow
5. Paisley
6. Pollockshaws, Rutherglen, Patrick, Parkhead, Hamilton, Wishaw, Carluke, Lanerk, Carnworth, Cairstairs, Strahaven, Dalry, Kilwinning, Renfrew, Brigg of Johnston, Kilburchan, Kilmalcolm, Port-Glasgow, Greenock.—Remarks
7. Edinburgh
8. Leith, Dalkeith, Kirkcaldy, Cupar in Fife, Newburg, Dunfermline
9. Falkirk, Tillycoultry, Dumblane, Blackford, Crief, Perth
10. Dundee, Forfar, Arbroath
11. Aberdeen
12. Jedburgh, Darnick, Melrose, Galashiels
13. Remarks

CHAPTER XI. Missionary labors in Cumberland, Westmorland, Northumberland, and Durham 308
1. Great Salkeld, Plumpton Street
2. Kendal, Kirkby Lonsdale
3. Newcastle, North Shields, Lemington, Bedlington, Morpeth
4. Sunderland, Stockton on Tees
5. Remarks

CHAPTER XII. Missionary labors in Lancashire and Cheshire..... 317

1. Summary view
2. District of the Methodist Unitarians, Rochdale and five other places: Newchurch Rossendale, Bacup, Rattenstall, Haslingden, Burnley, Padiham and two other places; Todmorden and another place.
3. Preston, two villages, Houghton-Tower, Blackburn, Mellor
4. Bolton, Warmsley, Derwin, Cockey-Moor, Bury, Heapfald, Catshole, Ratcliffe, Heywood, Rochdale
5. Oldham, Middleton, Blackley, Dob-lane and two other places
6. Manchester, Platt, Cross-Street, Stockport, Hyde, Dukenfield
7. Monton, Swinton, Irlam-o'-th'-Heights, Stand, Astley, Chowbent, Leigh
8. Chorley, Ormskirk, Hindley, West-Houghton, Wigan, Parklane
9. Liverpool, Prescot, Knowsley, St. Helens
10. Warrington, Risley, another village, Knutsford, Dean Row, Hale, Congleton
11. Chester, Tarvin, Kelsall, Kingsley, Nantwich and five other places
12. Remarks

CHAPTER XIII. Missionary exertions in Derbyshire, Nottinghamshire, Leicestershire, Northamptonshire, Huntingdonshire, and Hertfordshire..... 344

1. Derby, Melbourne, Chesterfield
2. Nottingham, Mansfield, Newark
3. Leicester, Hinckley
4. Peterborough, Stilton
5. St. Ives, Fen-Stanton, and some other places
6. Hertford, Royston

CHAPTER XIV. Missionary labors in Warwickshire, Worcestershire, Staffordshire, and Shropshire 351

1. Atherstone, Coventry
2. Alcester, Catholic liberality—Evesham, Kingswood
3. Birmingham
4. The iron works, Coseley, Bilston, Dalliston, Oldbury, Wolverhampton
5. The Potteries, Newcastle, Hanley, Lane-end Red-street—Remarks
6. Whitchurch

CHAPTER XV. Missionary labors in Wales 364

1. Cardiganshire, Pant-y-Defaid, Capel-y-Graes, Lloyd-Jack, Lampeter, Llandyssil
2. Pembrokeshire, Templeton, Narbeth, Saundersfoot, Jeffreston, Carew, Pembroke, Haverfordwest, Milford, Tenby
3. Carmarthenshire, Panteg, Ryd-y-Park, Felin-Court, St. Clears, Carmarthen, Kidwelly, Llanelly, Llangyndeirn, Brecfa, Llandilo, Llandyfaen, Llandybie
4. Glamorganshire, Gelligron, Swansea, the White Rock, Neath, Gellionen, Wick, Newton-Nottage, Bridgend, Betews, Cardiffe, Caerphilly, Man-Moel, Blaen-y-Gwrach, Newbridge, Penderyn, Cymmar, Aberdare, Merthyr-Tydfil
5. Monmouthshire, Penmain, Tredegar, Newport
6. Breconshire, Coed y-Cymmar, Rhymney
7. Denbighshire, Wrexham, and another place
8. Remarks, Welsh hospitality

CHAPTER XVI. Missionary labors in Cornwall 383

Introductory remarks

1. Summary view
2. Falmouth
3. Flushing

4. Penryn, Mylor-Bridge, St. Mawes, Port-Skatho, Perranwell
5. Truro, Helston, Marazion, Penzance, Newlynn, Moushole, St. Just, St. Ives, St. Earth, Redruth, St. Day, Cambron, Tuckingmill, Pool, Chasewater, St. Agnes, Mevagessy, Leskeard
6. Remarks

CHAPTER XVII. Missionary Labors in Devonshire, Somersetshire, Dorsetshire, Hampshire, Berkshire, and Wiltshire 402

1. Plymouth, Dock, Tavistock, and another place, Moreton-Hampstead, Exeter, Totness, Sidmouth, Honiton, Crediton, Collumpton, Tiverton
2. Taunton, Bridgewater, Shipton-Mallet, Blackford, Wedmoor, Ilminster, Yeovil, Wellington, Bristol, Bath
3. Bridport, Dorchester, Poole, Warcham
4. Ringwood, Southampton, Rumsey, Fareham, Newport, Isle of Wight; Portsmouth
5. Reading, cause of the temporary failure of the cause in that Town
6. Salisbury, liberality of the Methodists, Warminster, Trowbridge, Bradford, Hilperton-Marsh

CHAPTER XVII. Labors in the Metropolis and its vicinity 422

1. Visits to London prior to residing in its vicinity
2. Deptford, Brentford, Stratford
3. Supplied for Mr. Vidler during part of the time he was confined by the illness which terminated in his death
4. How employed during a residence of three winters in the vicinity of London

5. Woolwich, revival of the cause at Stratford, Wood Street, Charles Street, Borough
6. Remarks

CHAPTER XIX. Results of my observation and experience as an Unitarian Missionary..... 439

1. That Unitarianism is suited to the poor and unlearned
2. The efficacy of Missionary plans
3. The importance and necessity of employing local preachers
4. The mode of preaching best suited to the mass of the people
5. Unitarianism the proper remedy for infidelity
6. Also for uncharitableness
7. Success not to be expected without persevering exertion
8. Encouraging prospects of Unitarians

CHAPTER XX. Miscellaneous remarks

1. Students who traveled as assistants in missionary journeys
2. The importance of a missionary having an assistant when he labors on new ground
3. What should be done to prepare the way for missionaries in certain districts
4. Economical plans recommended
5. Remarks respecting the Unitarian Fund
6. Congratulation

☞ The preceding Table of Contents presents to the Reader a list of most of the places, to which the exertions of the Missionary were extended; and the number of the chapters and sections, placed at the head of the pages, agreeing with those in the Table, will enable him to find any article in the work without the least difficulty.

The Author had intended to add, as an appendix, a selection of anecdotes, of occurrences, conversations, &c., during his Missionary life; but, as many of these have been already communicated to the public in the Christian Reformer, and as others may be inserted in future numbers of that work, he has thought it best to omit them in the present publication. It has been his aim to avoid, as much as possible, a repetition of what has been already published, concerning his Missionary labors, in the Reports of the Unitarian Fund Committee; this could not be entirely avoided; but it has been done so far as seemed consistent with the design of the present work: and the Reader will find that a considerable part of the preceding pages are filled with matter never before published. For a more circumstantial account of some of the Missions in which the Author engaged, and his observations at the close of them, the Reader is referred to the extracts from the Reports of the Unitarian Fund, inserted in the volumes of the Monthly Repository and the Christian Reformer.

FINIS.



ERRATA.

Page 17, line 5, for *conluding* read *concluding*. P. 20, last l. f. *plausable* r. *plausible*. P. 34, l. 13, f. *o* r. *of*. Ps. 46 & 48, f *Sutton* r. *Lutton*. P. 53, f. *Suffolk* r. *Sussex*. P. 84, l. 4, f. *These* r. *There*. P. 101, l. 12, f. *dicision* r. *decision*. P. 243, after *choose* dele *to*. P. 269, f. *these* r *there*. P. 300, last l. after *maintained* add *damnable*. P. 396, last l. f *Port Shatho* r *Port Skatho*. P 399, l 3, f congregations r congregation. P. 409, l 5, f *Skipton Mallet* r *Shipton-Mallet*. P 431, l 10, f *were* r *was*. P 437, l 3 from the bottom, f *ondon* r *London*. P 450, l 15, f *discenssions* r *discussions*. P 472, l 11, f *cribing* r *scribing*.

The reader is requested to notice that many of the above corrections are necessary but for a part of the copies. Some of the errors occurred from accidents, while the sheets were working at press; others were detected and corrected while the sheets were in progress; it was judged better to notice the whole as above; and should any have escaped the Author's notice he relies on the reader's indulgence to supply the deficiency.

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